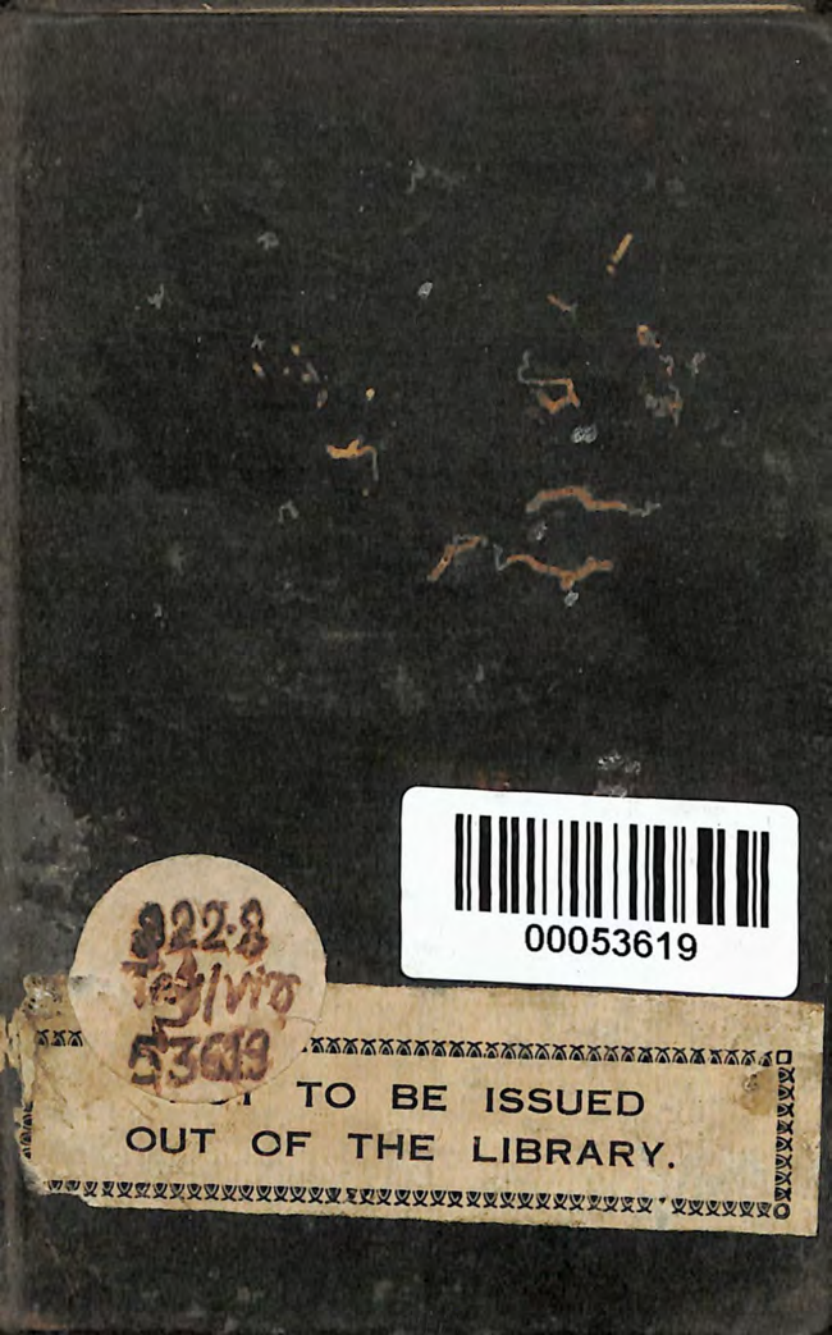
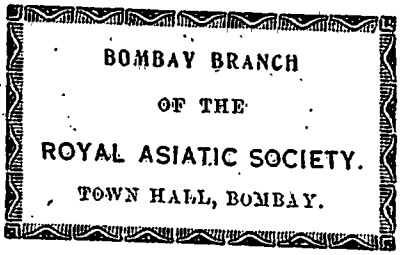

00053619
922.8
Tag/Vis
5369
TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 16 January, 2016

THE

VIRGIN WIDOW.

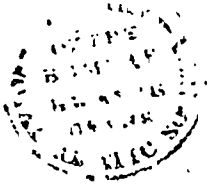
A PLAY

53619
ac

BY

HENRY TAYLOR

AUTHOR OF "PHILIP VAN ARTEVELDE."



LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
LONDON.

1850.

WORKS IN VERSE AND PROSE BY H. TAYLOR.

PHILIP VAN ARTEVELDE.

Fourth Edition. 24mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

EDWIN THE FAIR, AND ISAAC COMNENUS.

Second Edition. 24mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

THE EVE OF THE CONQUEST;

AND OTHER POEMS. Fcp. 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

THE VIRGIN WIDOW.

Fcp. 8vo. 6*s.*

THE STATESMAN.

12mo. 6*s.* 6*d.*

NOTES FROM LIFE,

IN SIX ESSAYS. *Third Edition.* Fcp. 8vo. 6*s.*

1. MONEY.
2. HUMILITY AND INDEPENDENCE.
3. CHOICE IN MARRIAGE.
4. WISDOM.
5. CHILDREN.
6. THE LIFE POETIC

NOTES FROM BOOKS.

Second Edition. Fcp. 8vo. 9*s.*

LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODES and SHA
New-street-Square

822.8
Tay/Vir
53619

TO

W. C. MACREADY

TO WHOSE EXCELLENT JUDGMENT

IN MATTERS OF ART

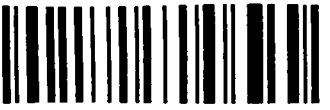
THIS WORK

IS LARGELY INDEBTED

IT IS

WITH SINCERE RESPECT AND REGARD

VERY GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.


00053619

PREFACE.

In a letter which Mr. Southey wrote many years ago, on a first and very juvenile attempt of mine in dramatic composition, he observed, that pure tragedy was what few but the young could bear. I felt the truth of the observation before youth was past; and though there are other grounds on which I should have preferred the mixed drama — it is so much more various in its spirit, more wide and general in its scope — yet the oppressiveness of pure tragedy would have been sufficient of itself to turn me away from it ere long; and

as life advances, tragedy of any kind, however mixed and attempered, seems to demand more of the hardihood, perhaps, I may say, the hardness of youth, than it is either likely or desirable that after years should be armed with.

Comedy is doubtless a lower, and, in some measure, a lesser sphere; for whilst tragedy — that is, the mixed and romantic tragedy — admits all elements, not excepting the comic, comedy does not admit the tragic, — which, indeed, can hardly exist except through a general and predominating effect. This, however, is the only element which comedy necessarily excludes. The mere comedy of manners and repartee which has been written for the last two centuries, is, no doubt, with all the brilliancy which it has occasionally exhibited, a somewhat narrow representation of human life. But the romantic and poetic comedy which preceded, includes, though not the four

seasons, yet the spring, summer, and autumn of nature. It is light and sweet for the most part; but without losing its prevailing character of lightness and sweetness, it can in turn be serious, pathetic, and still more eminently wise. In no works are the pleasantries of wisdom more bright and abundant than in the comedy of the Elizabethan age.

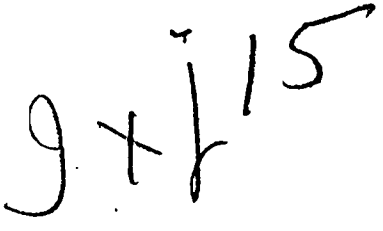
I wish it were possible, not indeed to repeat that comedy, but to renew the spirit which gave birth to it. Fictions are written in these days often with great power and ability; but to me they seem powerful only to give pain. Our writers of fictions would appear to despair of getting an answer from the popular imagination in any other way than by breaking it on the wheel. I well know that in times of rapid movement light pressures are not easily felt. But I venture to believe that, here and there, in the

recesses of society, there may still be found persons, who, like myself, do not desire to be *harrowed*, and are better pleased to be taken amongst the amenities of fiction, than amongst its glooms and terrors.

Ladon House, Mortlake.
1st May, 1850.

THE VIRGIN WIDOW:

A PLAY:



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Don Pedro, *King of Sicily.*
Silisco, *Marquis of Malespina.*
Ruggiero, *Count of Arona.*
Ubaldo, *Great Chamberlain.*
Ugo, *Count of Arezzo.*
Gerbetto, *the King's Physician.*
Tribolo, *The King's Fool.*
Chief Justiciary.
Spadone, *a Sea-captain. A Boatswain and Mate.*
Haggai, Sadoc, *and* Shallum, *Jews.*
Fra Martino, *Chaplain to Count Ugo.*
Girolamo, *Steward to Count Ugo.*
Osporco, *a Farmer.*
Bruno, *and* Conrado, *Attendants on Silisco.*
A Manager, and divers Players; Provost Marshal, and Marshalsmen, Courtiers, Citizens, &c.

WOMEN.

Rosalba, *Daughter to Ubaldo.*
Fiordeliza, *her Friend.*
Aretina, *Mistress to Spadone.*
Lisana, *Daughter to Gerbetto.*
Mariana, *Servant to Fiordeliza.*
Abbess *of the Convent of San Paolo.*

THE VIRGIN WIDOW.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Quay in front of the Palazzo Malespina at Palermo—SPADONE, BOATSWAIN, *and* MATE.

SPADONE.

When your Marquis turns merchant, see you the way of it! No sailing orders, and as much gone in demurrage as would buy a cargo.

BOATSWAIN.

West-South-West! as I'm a living soul, and as merry a breeze as ever gave a big belly to the foretopsail! Our chaplain on board the Rombola used to say that there were seven cardinal sins in sea-divinity.

and the worst of them was to keep a fair wind waiting.

SPADONE.

And a cargo too that longs for us. When we reach Rhodes, we shall take such a treasure of jewels and ingots aboard as the good ship never lodged before.

MATE.

Gold and jewels is a good cargo; for 'tis they that bring a man fair weather in this world.

SPADONE.

'Tis a cargo would buy fair weather for us three for the rest of our lives. But we'll talk of that aboard. Go thou, Antonio, and get me my orders.

MATE.

Where shall I find you?

SPADONE.

In the catacombs. Thou knowest the cavern where we hid those silks we brought from Genoa. Aretina is to meet me there.

MATE.

There, then, I will seek thee.

SPADONE.

And take heed to thy steps; for the worthy Noah's forefathers, that lived in the bowels of the earth, were men of crooked ways, and their paths are hard to hit. Go aboard, boatswain, and get the water stowed. We shall surely sail to night.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter GERBETTO *and* FRA MARTINO.

GERBETTO.

I ever found your counsel wise and sure.
One thousand ducats are well nigh my all;
The earnings of a life of infinite toil.

FRA MARTINO.

The Marquis should disperse them in a day,
And think the ducats and the day well spent.
And as for means of payment, you should know
The lands of Malespina stand impledg'd
For what he owes Count Ugo.

GERBETTO.

From his birth
I have denied him nothing; almost lov'd

The wants that sent him to me, hoping still
That as he grew to ripeness, what was soft
Would harden in him, what was hard would soften;
For he was of a sweet and liberal nature.
But lending this to lose it, robs my child,
My poor Lisana, of that little store
I gather'd for her dowry.

FRA MARTINO.

For what end?
Not for his good,—be wiser than to think it.
Give thou to no man, if thou wish him well,
What he may not in honour's interest take:
Else shalt thou but befriend his faults, allied
Against his better with his baser self.

GERBETTO.

Look! who be these? the marquis and his friends.
A banquet waits them at the palace. Ah!
A greeting by the way. He cannot pass,
No not a dog nor cat, but he must speak.
Let us begone, for I were loth to meet him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Palazzo Malespina—SILISCO, RUGGIERO *and other Noblemen.* BRUNO *and* CONRADO. *A Manager and three Players. Singers and Dancers, and amongst the former* ARETINA.

SILISCO.

Off with these viands and this wine, Conrado;
Feasting is not festivity: it cloys
The finer spirits. Music is the feast
That lightly fills the soul. My pretty friend,
Touch me that lute of thine, and pour thy voice
Upon the troubled waters of this world.

ARETINA.

What ditty would you please to hear, my Lord?

SILISCO.

Choose thou, Ruggiero. See now, if that knave . . .
Conrado, ho! A hundred times I've bid thee
To give what wine is over to the poor
About the doors.

CONRADO.

Sir, this is Malvoisie
And Muscadel, a ducat by the flask.

SILISCO.

Give it them not the less; they'll never know;
And better it went to enrich a beggar's blood
Than surfeit ours;—Choose thou, Ruggiero!

RUGGIERO.

I!
I have not heard her songs.

SILISCO.

Thou sang'st me once
A song that had a note of either muse,
Not sad, nor gay, but rather both than neither.
What call you it?

ARETINA (*touching her lute*).

I think, my Lord, 'twas this.

SILISCO.

Yes, yes, 'twas so it ran; sing that, I pray thee.

ARETINA (*sings*).

I.

I'm a bird that's free
Of the land and sea,
I wander whither I will;
But oft on the wing,
I falter and sing,
Oh fluttering heart, be still,
Be still,
Oh fluttering heart, be still.

II.

I'm wild as the wind,
But soft and kind,
And wander whither I may,
The eye-bright sighs,
And says with its eyes,
Thou wandering wind, oh stay,
Oh stay,
Thou wandering wind, oh stay.

SILISCO.

There! have you heard elsewhere a voice like hers?
The soul it reaches not is far from Heaven,
Is't not, Ruggiero?

RUGGIERO.

To say ay to that
Were for myself to claim a place too near ;
For it not reaches only, but runs thro' me.

MANAGER.

Now, had she clapped her hand upon her heart
In the first verse which says "Oh fluttering heart" . .

FIRST PLAYER.

And at "oh stay" had beckoned thus or thus . . .

SECOND PLAYER.

And with a speaking look . . .

MANAGER.

But no — she could not —
It was not in her.

SILISCO.

You'll not take the gold?
Wear this then for my sake. It once adorned
The bosom of a Queen of Samarcand,
And shall not shame to sit upon this throne.

[*Hangs a jewel round her neck.*

ARETINA.

My heart, my Lord, would prize a gift of yours,
Were it a pebble from the brook.

SILISCO.

What ho!
Are not the players in attendance? Ah!
A word or two with you, my worthy friends.

FIRST SINGING GIRL.

Why, Aretina, 'tis the diamond
Was sold last winter for a thousand crowns.

SECOND SINGING GIRL.

A princely man!

THIRD SINGING GIRL.

In some things; but in others
He's liker to a patriarch than a prince.

FIRST SINGING GIRL.

I think that he takes us for patriarchs,
He's so respectful.

SECOND SINGING GIRL.

Tell Spadone that;
Bid him believe such gifts are given for nothing;
A diamond for a song!

SILISCO.

With all my heart;
We'll have the scene where Brutus from the bench
Condemns his son to death. 'Twas you, Ruggiero,
Made me to love that scene.

MANAGER.

I think, my Lord,
We pleased you in it.

RUGGIERO.

Oh you did, you did;
Yet still with reservations: and might I speak
My untaught mind to you that know your art,
I should beseech you not to stare and gasp
And quiver, that the infection of the sense
May make our flesh to creep; for as the hand
By tickling of our skin may make us laugh
More than the wit of Plautus, so these tricks
May make us shudder. But true art is this,

To set aside your sorrowful pantomime,
Pass by the senses, leave the flesh at rest,
And working by the witcheries of words
Felt in the fulness of their import, call
Men's spirits from the deep; that pain may thus
Be glorified, and passion flashing out
Like noiseless lightning in a summer's night,
Show Nature in her bounds from peak to chasm,
Awful, but not terrific.

MANAGER.

True, my Lord:
My very words; 'tis what I always told them.
Now, Folco, speak thy speech.

BRUNO.

A word, my Lord;
The Maddelena's mate is here without,
And craves to see you.

SILISCO.

Call him in. Your pardon.
[*To the players.*
One moment and we'll hear you.

RUGGIERO.

Tis a speech
That by a language of familiar lowness
Enhances what of more heroic vein
Is next to follow. But one fault it hath:
It fits too close to life's realities,
In truth to Nature missing truth to Art;
For Art commends not counterparts and copies,
But from our life a nobler life would shape,
Bodies celestial from terrestrial raise,
And teach us, not jejunely what we are,
But what we may be when the Parian block
Yields to the hand of Phidias.

Enter Mate.

SILISCO.

Well, what cheer?

MATE.

Spadone sends me, Sir, for sailing orders;
The wind is fair, and we may lose a day
That's worth a week.

SILISCO.

Aye, say ye so? But stop;
Where may these Jews be found? You cannot sail
Without their warrants of delivery
Upon the goods at Rhodes.

BRUNO.

My Lord, the Jews
Have been these three hours in the outer hall
Much kicking of their heels and cursing Meroz.
You would have heard them, but I shut the door,
Knowing you love fresh air.

SILISCO.

Oh, bring them in.

ARETINA (*to the* MATE.)

To meet him in the Catacombs? I will.
Take this, and tell him not thou saw'st me here.

[*Gives him money, and exit.*

SILISCO.

Poor gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim!
I had forgotten them.

RUGGIERO.

The day will come
When they will not permit you to forget them.
Your bondsman, Haggai, will be then your lord
And master.

SILISCO.

In the reign of Tush and Pish.

RUGGIERO.

Farewell. I would not willingly look on
Whilst knavery prospers. Knavery, did I say?
Haggai and Sadoc, if I rightly read
The docket Nature scribbles on their skulls,
Are not more knaves than ruffians. Bear in mind
The Zita is in sight, which brings my friends
From Procida. You promised you would meet me
At vespers, on the shore, to see her in.

[*Exit.*

SILISCO.

Farewell. And you, my friends. I thank you all.
If business will not wait upon my leisure,
Still less shall you. To all a kind farewell.

[*Exeunt all but* SILISCO *and the* MATE,
BRUNO *and* CONRADO.

Enter HAGGAI, SADOC, *and* SHALLUM.

SILISCO.

God save you, Jews; have ye brought me those writings?

HAGGAI.

Your worship shall behold them: here they be. Two skins.

SILISCO.

"To the rich and worshipful Nimshi, our brother at Rhodes, these:" — This is the order for the treasure. Take it, Mate, and begone; and by sunset let the good ship Maddelena look small in the offing, like a lobster with its legs up.

[*Exit* MATE.

What next? the charter-party. Fifty ducats per diem — crew to be found in all things needful, — was it so? — Freightage — demurrage — brokerage — Brokerage! Why Haggai, the ship being thine own, and the bargain struck betwixt thee and me, whence is the brokerage? I saw no broker.

HAGGAI.

Your worship shall understand. In taking of a ship

on freight, there ever comes betwixt him that owns her and him that takes her, that useful and that profitable man, a broker. 'Tis the law and the usage. Is it not, Sadoc? Is it not, Shallum?

SADOC.

The law and the usage.

SHALLUM.

Justly the law and usage.

SILISCO.

But is that useful profitable man invisible? for I saw him not. I dealt not with him.

HAGGAI.

Your worship shall understand. Lo! the times are evil, and hardly shall your servant live if he sweat not in two callings. Truly I own a ship, and in the way of an honest industry I do likewise follow the occupation of a broker.

SILISCO.

Oh! I see. Thou wert thyself that profitable man.

HAGGAI.

At half the charge that it should have cost you else. Was it not, Sadoc?

SADOC.

Yea, and that half halved.

HAGGAI.

Was it not, Shallum?

SHALLUM.

Truly, Sir, for a reasonable broker, there is none other that I can commend you to but only the worthy Haggai.

SILISCO.

To make a bargain 'twixt himself and me. What is this other? oh! the mortgage. Stop.

HAGGAI.

His worship calls.

SADOC.

Ho! pen and ink.

SHALLUM.

Lo, here!

SILISCO.

If I understand this writing, it pledges, not Villa Guastata only, but my other effects whatsoever.

HAGGAI.

Villa Guastata! Woe is me! I travelled and gat me

to the spot. Woe! Woe! Woe! a desolation and a hissing!

SILISCO.

Nay, nay, Haggai; the property is sufficient for the charge. But as I have a purpose of payment, I care not what effects thou makest answerable.

[*Signs the deed.*

There—have we made an end?

HAGGAI.

Of this present business. But there be certain lands at Punto Vecchio that bring your worship but little profit at present . . . .

SILISCO.

My worthy masters! Lo! the times are evil!
Surely your servant in more ways than one
Must use his diligence; and having spent
The past hour greatly to my profit here,
The next I purpose spending in the woods
Amongst the nightingales. God speed you, Sirs.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Catacombs under the Western Suburb of Palermo.

ARETINA *alone.*

ARETINA.

He loves my singing, but he loves not me.
How should he? knowing me so vilely link'd
With this Spadone. To have fallen was sad,
But for the love of such a knave as this,
To fall, was falling doubly;—not as Eve
Lur'd by the fruit, but by the Serpent's self.
Yet is the Serpent not so very wise,
To think that, having fallen, I am his
For ever, and must evermore misdeem
His venom to be nectar. No, could I pierce
The plot that now he hatches — sure I am
There's perfidy design'd — the last were this
That I should see of these detested caves,
Or of this wretch and his barbarities.

Enter SPADONE.

SPADONE.

According to thy wont — blear-ey'd, I see. What hath sprung the leak now?

ARETINA.

Were I to tell thee I should find no pity; so I may keep my counsel.

SPADONE.

Pity! As great a pity to see a woman weep, as to see a goose go barefoot. 'Tis their nature. But, hark you, my girl; if gold can make thee merry, thou shalt not maunder long. When I come back from Rhodes . . . .

ARETINA.

Yes. Shalt thou bring much gold with thee?

SPADONE.

Treasure upon treasure! heap upon heap! Here, in this very cave, thou shalt see it; and what is more, thou shalt have it in thy keeping. For when I shall have seen it safe with thee, it will be needful I should make away for Calabria, and whistle off a month or two till I shall see how things be taken.

ARETINA.

But whence will this treasure come?

SPADONE.

When the Maddelena shall be seen in the offing, hie thee hither. Wait not till she comes into port, for that may chance to be a tedious time; and if they should tell thee that we have gone to the bottom, heed not that; for thou shalt find me here notwithstanding.

ARETINA.

But tell me, whence is the treasure?

SPADONE.

For the gold, it comes out of the bowels of the earth. The diamonds were digged up in the further Ind. Touching the pearls, thou shalt ask of an oyster; and in respect of the jewels, a toad could tell thee somewhat. Hark! I hear the Mate bellowing for me through the caverns like a calf that hath lost its dam. Fare thee well!

ARETINA.

Here then we meet when thou returns't. Farewell.

[*Exit* SPADONE.

And for the gold thou bringest, whence it comes

Thou know'st not better than I know myself.
It is Silisco's gold. Whither it goes,
Thou know'st not better—nor so well. In trust
For him I'll take it. Falsehood to the false
Is woman's truth, and fair fidelity.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

The Sea-Shore near Palermo—SILISCO *and* RUGGIERO.

SILISCO.

With what a saucy, blithe, and buxom grace
She breasts the blushing waters. Fare thee well,
Thou good ship Maddelena. Welcome home,
Thou good ship Zita.

RUGGIERO.

But the wind that speeds
That outward bound, baffles this homeward bark.
She cannot cross the bar; and what is that?
Look there—a boat is pushing from her side
To bring her charge ashore.

SILISCO.

The richest freight
That ever Procida produc'd, they say,
This Countess is—heiress to all the wealth
Of old Ubaldo. Is she fair beside?

RUGGIERO.

Indeed she is.

SILISCO.

As fair as she that comes
In her fair company?

RUGGIERO.

As Fiordeliza?
In my allegiance, I must answer, No;
Yet each is in her kind supremely fair.

SILISCO.

Thou painter, poet, moralist, what not?
Show me their pictures—say them, sing them, paint them.

RUGGIERO.

Painting is perilous when the proof is near;
Yet take, to pass the time, some rude essay.

SILISCO.

First for the island Countess.

RUGGIERO.

First for her.

In the soft fulness of a rounded grace,
Noble of stature, with an inward life
Of secret joy sedate, Rosalba stands,
As seeing and not knowing she is seen,
Like a majestic child, without a want.
She speaks not often, but her presence speaks,
And is itself an eloquence, which withdrawn,
It seems as though some strain of music ceas'd
That fill'd till then the palpitating air
With sweet pulsations. When she speaks indeed,
'Tis like some one voice eminent in the choir,
Heard from the midst of many harmonies
With thrilling singleness, yet clear accord.
So heard, so seen, she moves upon the earth
Unknowing that the joy she ministers,
Is aught but Nature's sunshine.

SILISCO.

Call you this
The picture of a woman or a Saint?

When Cimabue next shall figure forth
The hierarchies of heaven, we'll give him this
To copy from. But said you, then, the other
Was fairer still than this?

RUGGIERO.

I may have said it;
I should have said, she's fairer in my eyes.
Yet must my eyes be something worse than blind,
And see the thing that is not, if the hand
Of Nature was not lavish of delights
When she was fashion'd. But it were not well
To blazon her too much; for mounted thus
In your esteem, she might not hold her place,
But fall the farther for the fancied rise.
For she has faults, Silisco, she has faults;
And when you see them you may think them worse
Than I, who know, or think I know, their scope.
She gives her moods the mastery, and flush'd
With quickenings of a wild and wayward wit,
Flits like a firefly in a tangled wood,
Restless, capricious, careless, hard to catch,
Though beautiful to look at.

SILISCO.

By my faith
She's a wild growth, to judge her by her fruits,
For she torments you vilely Prudent friend,
Rosalba being what you say, why fix
Your heart on Fiordeliza?

RUGGIERO.

Wherefore? why?
When hearts are told by number, weight, and measure,
I'll render you a reason for my love.
Till then, I say it was my luck to love her;
Ill luck or good, I know not yet. For you,
I would it were your luck to love Rosalba,
So you might wed her. But the rumour is
That she is brought from Procida to be given
To old Count Ugo.

SILISCO.

Good old man, he's welcome.
A simpler hearted creature never liv'd
To put on spectacles and see the world
Grow wise and honest, and I wish him joy.
And I will take example by him too,

And marry when I'm seventy; and till then
I'll live as heretofore, and take delight
In God's creation revell'd in at large,
And not this work or that.

RUGGIERO.

So do; 'tis best
So long as it suffices. See how fast
The light skiff shoots along. A few pulls more
Shall bring them in.

SILISCO.

Now show me which . . . oh! she
In the red scarf, is Fiordeliza.

RUGGIERO.

Yes;
They know me now and kiss their hands. At first
You'll think Rosalba fairer.

SILISCO.

By my faith
If what I there behold be flesh and blood,
Nature can fashion counterfeits of Saints
More cunningly than you. In Nature's right
My hasty commendation I recall,

And say your picture was as cold as clay
And colour'd from the vapours of the north.

RUGGIERO.

Easy your oars, good coxswain! way enough!
A thousand welcomes! Ladies, if the hearts
That leap to meet you . . . .

SILISCO.

Make your footing sure;
Jump out my lads and steady her . . . . there . . . . so.

[*Enter, landing from the boat,* UBALDO, ROSALBA, *and* FIORDELIZA, *with sailors and attendants.*

RUGGIERO.

Oh my good Lord, the King hath miss'd you much.

UBALDO.

Hath he, Sir, truly? well, he's kind; but we
That will have children, are enforc'd at times,
Losing the courtiers in the father's office,
To dance attendance on a chit like this.
Bring the goods after. Shall we to the palace?

FIORDELIZA.

Kind ocean, fare thee well! I would that earth
Demean'd herself no worse. I'll stamp upon her.

RUGGIERO.

What is your quarrel with the earth, fair lady?
Are not her titles equal to the ocean's?

FIORDELIZA.

The earth breeds men, Sir, but the ocean fish.

UBALDO.

Rosalba, are you lost? Come on, come on.
I crave your pardon, Sir, I should have known you;
My lord of Malespina, if I err not;
In health, I hope, Sir? Ah, Sir! youth and strength—
We prize them when they're gone; we prize them then.

SILISCO.

I thank you, Sir, I thank you; I am well;
I wish you a good voyage.

UBALDO.

God be praised,
Our voyage, which was very good, is ended.
This way, child; are you dreaming? Sir, sometimes

When duty calls you to the palace, think
Of the old Chamberlain ; in sooth, my Lord,
We shall most gladly greet you. Fare you well.

[*Exeunt all but* SILISCO.

SILISCO.

I answered like an idiot. So I felt;
Doubtless so looked. Can I not lose my heart
But I must lose my understanding too ?
Count Ugo ! He's a gallant light and gay
To what I seemed — a very dullard I,
If not a dotard. Can a man so change
In less than fifty years, and be himself
And yet withal belie the self he was
An hour — a minute, I might say, before ?
But we shall meet again — perhaps to-morrow —
And I'll shake off the stupor of to-day,
And be my better self. To-morrow ! yes —
I am not in my nature what I seem'd —
That all Palermo's tongues will testify —
And there is that within me springing now
Shall testify it better. Hope and Joy,
My younger sisters, you have never yet

Been parted from my side beyond the breadth
Of a slim sunbeam, and you never shall.
Already it is loosened, it is gone,—
The cloud, the mist; across the vale of life
The rainbow rears its soft triumphal arch,
And every roving path and brake and bower
Is bathed in coloured light. Come what come may,
I know this world is richer than I thought
By something left to it from paradise;
I know this world is brighter than I thought,
Having a window into heaven. Henceforth
Life hath for me a purpose and a drift.

[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Avenue in the Gardens of the Palazzo Malespina. In the back scene tents are spread for a fête champêtre. — CONRADO *and* BRUNO.

CONRADO.

And all for her! Well, she's a gracious lady;
But there's a measure, master Bruno.

BRUNO.

Yea,
She's a sweet lady, but she's costly, Sir.
The tournament, the banquet and the masque
Shall reach a thousand ducats — in one day —
Gone in one day! the lands of Malespina
Are broad and fat; but all things have an end.

CONRADO.

A thousand ducats!

BRUNO.

Ere yon sun be set.

CONRADO.

And shall he win her when his all is spent?
True, she is heiress to Count Procida,
And rich enough to marry one that's poor;
But wealth will after kind,—it will, it will.
Attendance! here's the King!

BRUNO.

Fall back a space,
And make a sign to yonder gilded troop
To sound their cornets.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter THE KING, SILISCO, *and* RUGGIERO.

THE KING.

I grudge you not your victory in the tilting; for there were eyes fell with my fall, which I think better of than of any that blazed at your triumph. Who was she that cried out so piteously?

SILISCO.

Sir, 'twas the little Lisana, daughter of your Majesty's

Physician, Gerbetto. Ruggiero can tell you more of her than I. He frequents her for her singing.

THE KING.

A good musician is she ?

Enter UBALDO, ROSALBA, *and* FIORDELIZA.

RUGGIERO.

Sir, she's young,
Yet I have heard some adepts in her art
Who pleased me less ; for she is true, yet free,
Abandoned to her strain, and hath a voice
That who-so' hears feels for the time no touch
Of pain or weariness or troubled thought,
But following in the train of melody,
To that seductive sequence of sweet sounds
Tunes his attentive mind. 'Tis wonderful
What power upon the passionate soul of man
Resides in that low voice.

THE KING.

Well praised at least.

SILISCO.

Welcome, fair guests, again. Pass on, I pray.
The dance awaits you.

THE KING.

Presently we'll follow.

FIORDELIZA.

Well praised indeed! Indeed I wish her joy.

[*Exeunt* ROSALBA *and* FIORDELIZA.

THE KING.

Ruggiero, if this doctor's daughter sings so well, methinks our evening's entertainment should not be the worse for her. I pray you bring her hither.

[*Exit* RUGGIERO.

My lord of Malespina, attend your guests. We stay for a word with the Chamberlain, trusting thereby to do you some service.

[*Exit* SILISCO.

UBALDO.

This Marquis, my Lord, hath gifts by nature that might be fruitful in your Majesty's service, were he well guided; but as he carries himself, he is but to your court like the streamer over yonder pavilion, the ornament of a holiday and the plaything of the winds; and were not the intent of this day's doings to minister to your Majesty's amusement, I could call them most idle.

THE KING.

They are not for my amusement, I think, but in honour of another; and she, I hope, will regard them more favourably. My Lord, this month and more, and indeed since first your daughter came to court, it has been in my heart to speak with you on her behoof. She is, in my poor apprehension, a sweet, gentle, and of her years, truly a comely and majestic lady.

UBALDO.

Your Majesty is kind; and to speak of her truly, the child is of a goodly presence and demeanour, and hath a freshness and sweet savour that I know not if her father could boast these fifty years.

THE KING.

Surely; and looking on her comeliness and youth, shall it not touch us with some careful thoughts as to the bestowing of her in marriage. I think, Sir, with so much beauty there were no little danger in the mismatching of her.

UBALDO.

Most justly noted. Your Majesty hath the like discretion in affairs familiar as at the Council Board.

Yet a blind instinct had supplied me, and I had already taken thought for the girl. I think your Majesty knows whom I have provided, and that you could wish it no other.

THE KING.

Indeed, Sir, but I do. Count Ugo is a nobleman of surpassing worth and wealth; but his time of life borders on three-score and ten, and the years that he has left for her should be but labour and sorrow. Besides, the damsel being of so great virtue and discretion, the inclination of her own fancies and affections should methinks be somewhat regarded.

UBALDO.

Your Majesty's admonition is most wise. But you shall pardon me for averring that I have needed it not. To carry the damsel's inclinations with me, has ever been my care, and from her cradle I have bid her beware of those green gallants and those hot bloods which take a maid to wife as parcel of their revels, and lay her by like the napkin that hath wiped their beards. I bade her to know that a constancy of kindness should be found in those of riper years, and she,

being of a wise and prudent spirit, hath ever assented and applied herself to the affecting of old men.

THE KING.

Hath she indeed? But either my observation is at fault, or her assent extends not to Count Ugo.

UBALDO.

The watchfulness of a parent, my Lord, is more than discernment; else should I not presume to say, you err.

THE KING.

What! mean you that she is herself wishful to marry Count Ugo?

UBALDO.

She is, my Lord; Count Ugo is her choice,
Her absolute and unalterable choice.
I could not turn her from him if I would.

THE KING.

Now truly this is strange! You ought to know:
And yet I could have sworn her looks of love
Were bent upon another — on Silisco.

UBALDO.

Impossible! I warned her from the first
That marry whom she might she could not him.
His wealth was wondrous, once; but wondrous waste
Hath scattered it to every wind that blows.
His lands at Malespina are impledged
For more than they are worth — a monstrous sum —
To good Count Ugo. What he hath besides,
This Jew or that lays claim to.

THE KING.

There's a ship
Expected now from Rhodes, that, as I learn,
Brings treasure to Silisco of such price
As amply shall redeem his lands and him.

UBALDO.

My Lord, a large remainder of his wealth,
'Tis true, is coming swiftly o'er the sea
To gild a summer's day and disappear.
Lo! what he squanders even on this day's feast!
I crave your pardon, knowing him your friend,
My gracious Lord; but were it not a sin
To force my child aboard this leaky craft,

With every stitch of canvass madly set
To court the storm?

THE KING.

To force the lady's choice
Were any way a sin; but should she yield
(As, if I miss not of my aim, she will)
A free consent, I answer for my friend
That he shall leak no longer, but repair,
With such small aid as may be mine to give,
The vessel of his fortunes; which performed,
I trust a match so seemly, of a man
Whom doting Nature constituted heir
Of all she had, and accident upraised
To eminence of station, with a maid
As nobly born, and in her kind and sex
As excellently gifted, should command
Your kind approval.

UBALDO.

Sire, the maiden's choice
Is fixed on Ugo, and my faith is pledged.
But should Silisco liberate his lands
And settle them in trust, and should the Count

Release me, and the child be wrought upon
To change her purpose, then....

THE KING.

I think, my friend,
All these conditions you shall find fulfilled
Ere many days. Well, shall we see the dance?

[*Exeunt.*

Enter ROSALBA *and* FIORDELIZA.

FIORDELIZA.

Let me alone, I say; I will not dance.

ROSALBA.

Not if Ruggiero ask you?

FIORDELIZA.

He indeed!
If the Colossus came from Rhodes and asked me,
Perhaps I might.

ROSALBA.

Come, Fiordeliza, come;
I think, if truth were spoken, 'tis not much
You have against that knight.

FIORDELIZA.

Not much, you think;
Well, be it much or little 'tis enough.
He has his faults.

ROSALBA.

Recount me them; what are they?

FIORDELIZA.

I'll pick you out a few: my wallet: first,
He's grave; his coming puts a jest to flight
As winter doth the swallow.

ROSALBA.

Something else,
For this may be a merit; jests are oft
Or birds of prey or birds of kind unclean.

FIORDELIZA.

He's rude; he's stirring ever with his staff
A growling great she-bear that he calls Truth.

ROSALBA.

The rudeness is no virtue; but for love
Of that she-bear, a worser vice might pass.
Again?

FIORDELIZA.

He's slow,—slow as a tortoise,—once
He was run over by a funeral.

ROSALBA.

He may have failings; but if these be all,
I would that others were as innocent.

FIORDELIZA.

Oh, others! Say then who?

ROSALBA.

Nay,—others,—all.
I wish that all mankind were innocent.

FIORDELIZA.

Thou art a dear well-wisher of mankind,
And, in a special charity, wishest well
To that good knight Silisco. What! dost blush?

ROSALBA.

No; though you fain would make me.

FIORDELIZA.

No! What's this,
That with an invisible brush doth paint thee red?

Well, I too can be charitable, and wish
Silisco were less wicked.

ROSALBA.

Is he wicked?

FIORDELIZA.

Is waste not wickedness? and know'st thou not
The lands of Malespina day by day
Diminish in his hands?

ROSALBA.

True, waste is sin.
My mother (and no carking cares had she,
Nor lov'd the world too much nor the world's goods)
In many a vigil of her last sick bed,
Bid me beware of spendthrifts, as of men
That seeming in their youth not worse than light,
Would end not so, but with the season change;
For time, she said, which makes the serious soft,
Turns lightness into hardness.

FIORDELIZA.

Said she so?
But I am light myself.

ROSALBA.

Adversity
Will sometimes soften what should else be hard;
It may please Providence to visit thee
With some disaster for thy good.

FIORDELIZA.

Oh me!
Pray not for that! I will be good and grave
And soft without a bruise.

ROSALBA.

Sing a soft song;
If you are ever soft 'tis when you sing.

FIORDELIZA.

I will. You mean by that, a song of love.

(*Sings.*)

I.

Love slept upon the lone hill-side
And dream'd of pleasant days,
When he with flowers should deck his bride,
And she deck him with bays.

II.

He rose like day-break, flush'd with joy,
And went his way to court;
But there they took him for a toy,
And turn'd him into sport.

III.

He hung his head, his dreams were fled,—
Not here, not here, he cried,
But I shall find her in my bed
Upon the lone hill-side.

Enter SILISCO.

SILISCO.

My guests, I think,
Are tir'd of dancing, and the players wait.
What play shall they present?

FIORDELIZA.

A dolorous play;
A play to weep at.

SILISCO.

Do you love to weep,
Or in defiance choose a tragedy?

FIORDELIZA.

No, sir; I choose it but to give me rest
From laughing. I'm as lazy as the dog
That lean'd his head against a wall to bark.
And there are such a sort of men about me

As keep me running over. Lo now, there!

[RUGGIERO *crosses the back scene, leading* LISANA.]

What comedy can show me aught like that?
There is a man whose aspect, you would swear,
Proclaim'd Queen Nature's warrant and commission
To preach repentance to a sinful world
And frighten it,—upon whose brow you read
Pleasure's "hic jacet." Yet behold his life!
His occupation! Never seen abroad,
But in his hand some rosy Magdalen,
That looks as hastening to repeat the sin
She bloomingly repents. Oh, that is rare,
And I must see it to an end. Farewell!

[*Exit.*

ROSALBA.

Stay, Fiordeliza. Nay, then, I must follow.

SILISCO.

Not yet,—not yet. From what you said in the dance
I gather that the Court's calumnious tongues
Are busy with my name. My life, I know,
Has heretofore been led in such a sort
As makes the wise to wonder. Let them gape

As wide as wisdom may. I know besides
They charge me with some frailties that I own not;
And having of my genuine stock enough,
I would not you should therein err with them.
My life has been, though volatile, not gross;
For God bestow'd upon me at my birth
A heart that fill'd the measure of its joys
From its own fountains, craving nought beside.
So heretofore it was; and since that eve
When, as you landed in the dimpled bay
From Procida, I help'd you from the boat,
And touch'd your hand, and as the shallop rock'd,
Emboldened by your fears I . . . . pardon me,
I should not make you to remember more,—
But since that moment when the frolicsome waves
Toss'd you towards me,—blessings on their sport!
I have not felt one kindling of a thought,
One working of a wish but you were in it;
The rising sun that striking thro' the lattice
Awaken'd me, awaken'd you within me;
The darkness closing shut us up together:
I saw you in the mountains, fields, and woods;

Flowers breath'd your breath, winds chaunted with your voice,
And Nature's beauty cloth'd itself in your's.
Then think not that my life, though idly led,
Is tainted or impure or bound to sense;
Or if incapable of itself to soar,
Unworthy to be lifted from the dust
By love of what is lofty.

ROSALBA.

No, my Lord,
It was not *that* I heard, nor of that die;
Else had the taint remain'd upon the tongue
That spake. 'Twas but your prudence was impugn'd,
Nor with unfriendly comment.

SILISCO.

I am charg'd,
As ofttimes it is told me, by the world,
With reckless waste and wild improvidence.
What call they prudence? Money which I waste
I prize not. If I scatter to the winds
As often as I launch my caravel
To take my pleasure on the dancing waves,

A hundred million drops of ocean-spray,
Who says I waste sea-water? yet that spray
Is not more worthless in the world's account
Than gold in mine. But give me what I prize,
The living waters from the well of love,
The hope that, bubbling from my breast, shall feed
The roots of stately trees and odorous flowers,
And make my soul prolific,—give me that,
And you shall know me for a miser.

ROSALBA.

Oh!
Be careful of what love you venture for;
For in so much as love is better worth,
So prudence is more prizeable in love.
My hand, you know, is promis'd.

SILISCO.

Not by you.

ROSALBA.

To my dear mother, on the day she died,
I gave a promise, solemn as a vow,
That I in all things would obey my father,

And specially in the choice of whom to wed.
You know my father's choice.

SILISCO.

It cannot be;
He shall not link you to a living death;
The world, which is his idol, would revolt
From such an immolation; good men would blush,
And wicked men deride, and all cry shame
On the hard father and preposterous spouse.

ROSALBA.

My Lord of Malespina, I am young,
And know not how to answer words like these.
But they offend me. I have heard it said
No spendthrift ever yet was generous;
I hope it is not true. But bear in mind
That my good father hath a father's rights,
And I a daughter's duties. Think besides,
Count Ugo hath not injur'd you—nay more,
'Tis said that through a long and innocent life
He never injur'd any. For myself,
Although a coffin were my nuptial bed,
The promise to my sainted mother made
Should not be unfulfill'd.

SILISCO.

I stand reprov'd.
Pardon my ill behaviour : I am rude,
Unjust, ungenerous, by passion, Lady,
By nature not. One boon alone I beg.
I look not on you as on one betroth'd.
The King befriends me, and Count Ugo's will
Devoutly loyal answers to the King's
In all things. At a word he yields you up.
Your father is of sterner metal made ;
But though I rival not the Count in wealth,
Not many rival me, and thus the King
Will want not power with him too to prevail.
I therefore hold you as absolv'd and free.
Now were you truly in your own sight so,
And should I ask you then, — not for your love,
But for your leave to love you, what reply
Should greet me ?

ROSALBA.

Counting on my father's change,
You are, I fear, too sanguine.

SILISCO.

Do you *fear?*
That is a fear at which a thousand hopes
Start into life and swarm about my heart.
Recoil not, nor be frighted at the fire
One spark hath kindl'd—quench it not—oh leave
The beauteous element to mount and soar,
Though it should bear destruction on its wings;
For in the vast dark hollow of this world,
Whate'er of earthly affluence it devours,
It lights the heavens that else were but half seen.
You wish my suit to prosper,—give it room,—
Grant me at least till All-Saints'-Eve to bend
Your father's iron will.

ROSALBA.

That is not much;
Freely I grant you that.

SILISCO.

But plight your faith
That neither force, persuasion, nor the moods
Of changeful will that oft in woman's youth
Betray resolve, nor yet the masking voice

So plausible, of filial duty, found
In duty's self-destruction, shall prevail
To bind you to another till the term
Now granted shall expire.

ROSALBA.

That I am proof
Against some pressures which are said to strain
A woman's purpose from its constancy,
I show, methinks, not doubtfully in this,—
That granting you thus much I grant no more.
That little which I promise, judge from this
If I shall faithfully perform.

Enter BRUNO.

BRUNO.

My Lord,
I pray you pardon me; the Chamberlain
Calls for his daughter to attend him home,
As now the dews are falling.

ROSALBA.

Say I come.
I hope not with a fearless hope like yours;

But yet believe me, Sir, the hope I have,
If wreck'd, would bring a ruin on my heart
It hardly could sustain. I say too much:
And yet it seems too little. Fare you well.

SILISCO.

Look! where in yonder haven near the moon
Glitters the star they call the star of love.
A Spirit hath his dwelling in that star,
Whence emanating he on earth alights
Sometimes, but only in earth's happiest hours,
And ranging then earth's happiest regions through,
He seeks, and, bee-like, rifles of their sweets
The bosoms that are fullest of true love,
And so with rapture satiate reascends.
That Spirit to that star did never take
Of truer love an ampler treasure home
Than you, if you should seek, would find in me.
Farewell, belov'd Rosalba.

ROSALBA.

Fare you well.
Judge of me gently. Love me if you may.

[*Exit.*

BRUNO (*who had retired to the back scene, and now advances*).

That the dew was falling was God's truth; that the lady was sent for was Man's invention.

SILISCO.

How so? If it was thy invention, thy gift that way was never more unseasonably exercised.

BRUNO.

Hear me ere you pronounce. I had that to speak which I think you would not that she should hear. The Maddelena hath been seen and is seen no more. Some say she was seen to sink.

SILISCO.

Thou say'st not so? Then I sink too. But it cannot be. There hath been neither storm nor mist nor aught that could bring her to danger.

BRUNO.

She was clearly seen, and now she is lost to sight; so much is certain.

SILISCO.

Why 'tis the sun hath sunk and not the ship.
Broad daylight show'd what twilight cannot. Go,

Entreat my guests to pardon me awhile ;
The most are gone; I'll to the beach and see.

[*Exit.*

BRUNO.

There is a certain scum of them left which I shall know how to scatter. Had it not been for such locusts and caterpillars as these, the lands of Malespina had not now been coming by sea from Rhodes.

[*Exit.*

Enter HAGGAI *and* SADOC *meeting.*

HAGGAI.

Hast thou found him ?

SADOC.

My Lord of Malespina ? No.

HAGGAI.

They told me we should find him here. In two hours more the good ship shall be at the quay. Where is Shallum ?

SADOC.

He is on the watch-tower of the west gate, looking out upon the sea. No, he comes hither.

HAGGAI.

Yea, this is he,—but his hands are tossed up and his garment is rent. Hath aught happened to the ship?

Enter SHALLUM.

SHALLUM.

Come ye to the beach;—the ship and the treasure, my soul is troubled for the ship and treasure.

HAGGAI.

Nay, she cometh into port.

SHALLUM.

I beheld her from the watch-tower at eleven of the clock and until six; but she vanished and was no more seen, and my bowels yearn for her lest that she be lost, and the jewels and the ingots and the much treasures. But come ye to the beach.

HAGGAI.

Alas! alas! my brother Shallum, I will come with thee to the beach. But go thou, Sadoc, and sue out writs against my Lord of Malespina. By Aaron's rod his body shall be bail.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter the MANAGER *and the* THREE PLAYERS.

FIRST PLAYER.

What's ordered for to-night?

MANAGER.

Nothing's ordered. Every thing's forgotten. The great actors are playing their parts at court, and we the small must shift for ourselves. Yet they'll expect a play when the night comes, and it behoves us to choose what it shall be. What say ye, one and all?

SECOND PLAYER.

Tell them over, as many as we are primed with.

MANAGER.

First, here is "Sorrow's Sum Total!"

FIRST PLAYER.

Ah! that is a sweet play. It was written by a gentleman that was very loving and melancholy, and knew nothing but to sit by himself all day long weeping and making verses. But the play is too mournful for the Marquis: we'll not play that.

MANAGER.

Here is "Sursum Corda, or Down with the Dumps."

FIRST PLAYER.

The author of that was a great philosopher, and wrote an excellent treatise on polities, besides sundry tales, chazas, ballads and chansons. The Count of Arona was greatly pleased with him, and said that his systems had the charm of novelty, and his jests the sanction of long usage.

THIRD PLAYER.

I remember him well. He tossed his heart a thought too high, and it was killed by the fall. He died of drinking, poor gentleman; and therefore we will not act his play, inasmuch as, being dead, he will not make us the customary compliment.

MANAGER.

Here is "Time's Tympany?"

FIRST PLAYER.

'Tis too big.

MANAGER.

"Cupid's Wet Nurse?"

FIRST PLAYER.

'Tis pretty, but not passionate.

MANAGER.

"Love's Outgoings?"

FIRST PLAYER.

No.

MANAGER.

"Lust's Leavings?"

FIRST PLAYER.

The story hath a good moral, but sleeps in it as in a feather-bed.

MANAGER.

Then there is but one more,—"Woman half pleased, and Satan satisfied."

FIRST PLAYER.

'Tis easy choosing when nothing's left. That shall suffice for fault of a better. It hath matter in it and an outgrowth and consequence in the story.

MANAGER.

And for the casting . . . .

Enter BRUNO.

BRUNO.

Away, ye knaves and minions, get ye gone!
You've eaten all, ye saints of belly worship!

Ye gilded, painted, mimicries of men,
Ye butterflies by night, and bats by day!
Hence with your belly-gods!

MANAGER.

How now! how now!

BRUNO.

How now? Dost dare to say "how now" to me!
Thou urchin-snouted, trencher-pated rogue!
Where are thy manners and thy moderation,
To say "how now" to me? My noble Lord
Is lost, undone!

FIRST PLAYER.

My Lord of Malespina?

BRUNO.

Yes he, thou trivial tripper up of virtue,
Thou seven-times whipped and ne'er corrected rogue,
Thou inadvertency of Nature, he.
No need for peering at me o'er thy paunch;
I tell thee he is beggared and undone;
The Maddelena with the rich remains
Of all he had, is in the offing wrecked.

SECOND PLAYER.

We have not done it, Sir ; revile not us.

BRUNO.

Away, ye rotten-hearted, rancid knaves!
It was a wind that smelling you in the port
Made violent recoil. Hence, hogs, begone!
Play me no plays. Your trough is empty. Scud.
[*Exit, driving them out.*

SCENE II.

The Sea-shore — MATE *and* BOATSWAIN *of the Maddelena.*

MATE.

Bah! we did but what three rats would have done if it had pleased Providence. With what we got we may have absolutions for the skuttling of twenty such ships, — or of forty if the owners be Jews. Spadone makes small haste to return. Surely he has had time ten times told to hide the booty.

BOATSWAIN.

Hearest thou? The watch is cried at the city gates.

MATE.

How long are we to wait? If thou knowest the ways of the Catacombs, hie thee and fetch him off; for else Aretina will hold him half the night.

BOATSWAIN.

I know them not. But with that yell in his ears which followed us when we left the ship, it can hardly be woman's dalliance that withholds him. More likely she hath played him false.

MATE.

Then are we much in jeopardy. Lo! who comes here? By his gait and carriage it is the Marquis's fast friend my Lord of Arona. Push off, push off! Spadone must take his fate.

[*They betake themselves to their boat and put to sea.*

Enter RUGGIERO.

RUGGIERO.

Truly Silisco seems to have vanished as his ship vanished; in a moment and without a warning. Not

though, like the ship, without cause that may be conjectured; for assuredly there will be writs out against him when the news is known. He has conveyed himself doubtless to some safe hiding-place. What is that? a shock of seaweed or a head of hair? By Heaven, it is a man that wrestles with the surf. Courage, my friend! hold up thy head but an instant more and I am with thee.

[*Plunges into the surf, and brings out of it a sailor who was sinking.*

Why, cheer thee up? thou hast had a tustle for thy life, but thou hast it and art none the worse I think, for thy colour comes again. What! thou art doubtless a waif from the wreck of the Maddelena. But silence! I trouble thy devotions.

SAILOR.

Next to God, Sir, I give thanks to you; for under God it is to you that I owe my life. Strong swimming stood me in stead for two long hours, but then my strength was nigh spent, and the surf should have mastered me but for your help. I thank God for my life, and I thank God that all men are not the mer-

ciless villains that some are; for the villany that put me in this peril might have made me think mankind given over to the Devil, but for the charity that plucked me out of it.

RUGGIERO.

Villany! Why was it not the elements?

SAILOR.

The elements were guiltless. The wreck was a wreck of man's making, and of the Devil's setting on; and the captain, the mate, and the boatswain were the instruments. They scuttled the ship and made off in a boat with the treasure.

RUGGIERO.

Aye, verily did they? And I saw but now two men that fled at my approach as though the cry of blood were behind, and betook them to their boat.

SAILOR.

They should be three. But had they peaked beavers such as are worn at Rhodes?

RUGGIERO.

They had, and doubtless they are full in flight with their booty. Now if, as thou say'st, thou owest thy

peril to them and thy life to me, commit thyself with me to the craft that is tethered in yonder cove, and we will give chase to them.

SAILOR.

I am yours, Sir, for any service you shall command; and you could not put me to one more welcome. What course did they steer?

RUGGIERO.

As if making for the coast of Calabria. We shall have them in sight and to leeward round yonder point.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Catacombs—SPADONE *and* ARETINA.

SPADONE.

Silence! I did not come to thee for shrift.
Say one or fifty sent to feed the sharks,
What matters it? Of such a miscreant tribe
Each by the other would have done the like,

But that they lack'd the courage and the scope
To rise above some petty piracy.
Truly to see the gallant *ship* go down
Went to my heart—she was a goodly craft!
But for the crew, I'd drown them twice a-day
And think no pity on't, more than to drown
A litter of blind puppies. Fare thee well!
Remember that to him who brings thee this
[*Showing a ring.*
Thou shalt disclose the treasure—to none else.
And thou shalt send me tidings, too, by him
Of what is said in Sicily. Farewell.
[*Exit.*

ARETINA.

O monstrous crime! Ruthless, remorseless wretch!
And so besotted as to think my love
Would hold thro' all! A gurgling, sobbing sound
Is in my ears,—a booming overhead!
My blood runs cold. Oh! I shall faint! and here!
And should the light go out .... I hear a step ....
(*Enter* SILISCO.)
Who's there! Who are you?
[*Utters a sharp cry.*

SILISCO.

Nay, but who art thou?
I swear 'tis Aretina—cold as stone!
What dost thou here? nay, courage—come, look up;
A friendly arm is round thee—know'st not me?

ARETINA.

Oh yes, my Lord, I know you,—sent by Heaven—
For I have that to tell you . . . .

SPADONE (*who had re-entered unobserved and stabs her from behind.*)

Which thy throat
Shall utter through a bloody new-made mouth.

[ARETINA *shrieks and flies.*

And now, my Lord, for you!

SILISCO.

A woman's blood,
Dastard! is all that thou shalt shed to-day.

[*They fight.* SPADONE *falls.*

Slain is he? No, I think not—but he swoons.
Where's that unhappy girl? Fled forth the caves?
Well doth this caitiff merit to be left
To meet his fate. But should he wake to life

And find himself in darkness left to die
'Unshriven and unassoil'd! Most horrible!
Gerbetto's house is on the beach hard by;
I'll take him there: the worthy doctor's skill
May call him from his trance, and he may thus
Repent and live, or be absolv'd and die.

[*Exit, bearing out* SPADONE.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Gardens of UBALDO'S *Palace*—ROSALBA *and* FIORDELIZA.

FIORDELIZA.

Rosalba, nay Rosalba.

ROSALBA.

Am I not patient?

FIORDELIZA.

Well, I think you are: but I would have you cheerful. Look at me. Has not my lover vanished too?

ROSALBA.

True, Fiordeliza; sorrow is wont to be vilely selfish, and I am forgetting your trouble in mine own. Yet if I were not driven to marry another, methinks I also could be cheerful.

FIORDELIZA.

I will pity you for the driving; but you shall not pity me for the vanishing. I tell you that that sunshine and these flowers are more to me than love. They make me happy.

ROSALBA.

If that were so, your happiness should be but the happiness of a butterfly, and should last but a summer's season. I think it is not so; but be it or be it not, you are so bright a thing in mine eyes that I cannot desire you to be other than you are.

FIORDELIZA.

I am not a butterfly. But I wish in my heart that we were like the birds, which are in love only once a-year. I will sing you a song, and shall not that do you good?

(*Sings.*)

I.

Oh had I the wings of a dove,
Soon would I fly away,
And never more think of my love,
Or not for a year and a day:
If I had the wings of a dove

II.

I would press the air to my breast,
I would love the changeful sky,
In the murmuring leaves I would set up my rest,
And bid the world good bye:
If I had the wings of a dove.

ROSALBA.

It is a new song I think, but in an old sense, and one that will live as long as the world lives, unless the world should live to be better than it is.

FIORDELIZA.

Yes, or than it ever has been since the birds sang to Adam in the golden prime. They sang to him out of the tree of life, and knew better than to build their nests in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and though death comes to them, it comes unknown, and though love leaves them, they sigh not.

ROSALBA.

Is yon my father? Alas! I fear the very sight of him now.

FIORDELIZA.

Were I a nursing mother I should fear it, lest it should sour my milk.

ROSALBA.

He is always in the same story — that Silisco never will be seen again, and that Count Ugo cannot wait.

FIORDELIZA.

Well, as to the story, there is this truth in it, — that the rich Silisco will not be seen, and that Ugo will never again be as young as he is now. Indeed your father may have some cause to fear lest his purpose to marry be crossed by that hasty humour which happens to men at his time of life, of going to the grave at one jump.

ROSALBA.

Fie! Fiordeliza; it makes me sad, not merry, to hear you talk so lightly. Count Ugo, though he hath not, nor has had, the gifts and faculties which you set store by, was ever a just, courteous, and bountiful man, of good life and conversation, with a gentle and generous heart, and peradventure as much understanding as innocence has occasion for.

FIORDELIZA.

Oh! I grant him that; but nevertheless the good old golden pippin is ripe, and may drop while the gar-

dener is getting the ladder. There is the gardener,—and who besides? Gerbetto, the doctor, I think. They are deep in council, and are going to take another turn; so let me sing another song the while.

(*Sings.*)

I.

The last year's leaf, its time is brief
Upon the beechen spray;
The green bud springs, the young bird sings,
Old leaf, make room for May:
Begone, fly away,
Make room for May.

II.

Oh, green bud smile on me awhile,
Oh, young bird let me stay—
What joy have we, old leaf, in thee?
Make room, make room for May:
Begone, fly away,
Make room for May.

Enter UBALDO *and* GERBETTO.

UBALDO.

I bring you, daughter, a kind friend and a skilful physician, who can cure, I think, more maladies than

are mentioned in Hippocrates or Galen; and he would have a few words with you,—a few words with you, good lady, a few.

ROSALBA.

Master Gerbetto is a good friend to me, and ever welcome; and though I have given him but little opportunity for the exercise of his art, yet I have many times found comfort in his kindness.

GERBETTO.

Indeed, sweet lady, I would fain be comfortable to you if I might.

FIORDELIZA.

Well, if you may not, at least show us a less discomfortable countenance; for with that you have on now, you look more like adversity itself than a consolation in adversity.

UBALDO.

He brings, though not a comfort, yet a cure;
A cure for blindness and besotted dreams;
A cure for feminine credulity.
This swain, enamour'd as he seem'd of you,
Was all the while enamour'd of another;

And by that guilty passion's power impell'd
To deeper guilt, he stain'd his hands in blood,
And stands accountant for a rival's death.

FIORDELIZA.

Nay, sweet Rosalba, keep your courage yet;
This cannot be believ'd. Reach her yon seat.
Silisco never was impeach'd before
Of dissolute courses.

ROSALBA.

And he said himself,
His life, or ever it had found its law
From love and me, had still been pure.

UBALDO.

Oh dupe!
He told you, he! No doubt of it he did;
An unthrift was a liar from all time;
Never was debtor that was not deceiver.
Hold up thy head, poor child; poor monkey, nay,
'Tis a brief anguish that discards the vile,
The false, the faithless. Doctor, tell your tale.

GERBETTO.

Tis a sad task, that tale to tell, for me;

But I am bound to speak. Two months ago,—
That day it was the marquis disappear'd,—
Coming from vespers, in my house I found
A wounded man, swooning from loss of blood.
With sedulous care and what small skill is mine
I tended him, though deeming from the first
His hurt was mortal. Slowly day by day
He languish'd and declin'd, till yesternight,
Knowing his hour was come, he bade me hear
What brought him to that pass; which till that hour,
Wherefore I know not, he was loth to tell.
He said that in the caverns near the beach,
Not far from my abode, the self-same night
That I first found him wounded on the floor,
A damsel that affianc'd was to him,
By him was caught in passages of love
With a young lordling of the court; they fought;
He fell; and instantaneously bereft
Of sense, he knew no more, nor by what means
He reach'd my house. I ask'd him did he know
Who slew him; he replied, he knew him well,
The Lord of Malespina; at that word
He bounded from his bed, fell back, and died.

ROSALBA.

Alas! alas!

UBALDO.

Here is a terrible tale!
And this is he that would have wed my daughter!
I thank him that he puts me forth his foot,
And shows the cleft on't. Truly, yes, I thank him.
Now; daughter, I beseech you, prate no more
Of promises, and questions, and delays.
What day you please next week! 'Tis yours to choose.

ROSALBA.

Oh, father, father, give me time to think;
My brain is weak; I cannot understand
What's said to me, nor what I say myself.
Ere long this dimness will be clear'd away,
And I shall know my course; but, father, now
The waters have gone over me.

UBALDO.

Nay, nay,
So long as thou'rt unsettled, mutinous thoughts
Will vex thy heart; I know the ways of women;

But when what should be, must, contentment comes.
Compassion goes to work the shortest way;
Despatch is mercy: yet yourself shall choose;
Say Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, which you will;
Thursday or—no, not Friday—at your pleasure,
Thursday or Saturday. Go, go your ways.
Order whate'er shall please you; a brave day
We 'll make on't. Get you gone. Good cause had he
To fly the Court! The truculent villain! Ho!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Farmstead on the Lands of Malespina, in the Neighbourhood of the Castle.

Enter SILISCO *and* RUGGIERO.

RUGGIERO.

We chased them that night and the next day, gaining on them by little and little; but as evening fell, there came into the horizon a cloud no bigger than your hand, and in an instant the storm swooped

upon them like a bird of prey, and they went to destruction before our eyes, thief and booty together.

SILISCO.

Best friend and boldest, how fared you, I pray?

RUGGIERO.

The storm spared us, but we were sorely tormented by hunger and thirst that night; and when we landed next morning at Vetri, in Calabria, my strength was clean spent, and a fever was upon me that laid me low for many a day. When that left me, I found my way back with all speed, and learning from Monna the direction of your flight, I sped hither. Such is my history.

SILISCO.

Of mine remains
But little to recount. Spadone, or,
If he was dead, Spadone's corpse, I left
In old Gerbetto's cottage on the beach;
Nor waiting his return (for he was forth),
Back to the Catacombs I sped, and search'd
Each cranny, but could nowhere find my friend,
The luckless Aretina. In the caves

I dwelt by day. The night I chiefly spent
In my own gardens.

RUGGIERO.

In your gardens?

SILISCO.

Yes;

Behind the statue of Proserpina
There is a cavern fring'd with pensile plants,
By which, well-known to me in boyhood, opes
A passage to the Catacombs. Thro' this,
When first I heard that writs were out against me,
I, like a land-crab, into the earth had dropp'd,
And afterwards thro' this I issued thence
When darkness and the owls possess'd the world.
Ere long, impatient of my dreary life,
I meditated flight; and strange you 'll deem
The choice I made of whither to betake me.
But having not since childhood seen my lands,
A humour seiz'd me to revisit them;
And seeing I was here as little known
As elsewhere I could be, and peradventure
Should be less look'd for, hither did I come.

I found Count Ugo's people in possession,
The sometime mortgagee, the owner now.

RUGGIERO.

Why hither? it can bring you little joy
To look upon the lands that you have lost.

SILISCO.

To look upon the *days* that I have lost,
Ruggiero, brings me less; and here I thought
To get behind them; for my childhood here
Lies round me. But it may not be. By Heavens!
That very childhood bitterly upbraids
The manhood vain that did but travesty,
With empty and unseasonable mirth,
Its joys and lightness. From each brake and bower
Where thoughtless sports had lawful time and place,
The manly child rebukes the childish man;
And more reproof and bitterer do I read
In many a peasant's face, whose leaden looks
My host the farmer construes to my shame.
Injustice, rural tyranny, more dark
Than that of courts, have laid their brutal hands
On those that claim'd my tendance. Want and vice

And injury and outrage fill'd my lands,
Whilst I, who saw it not, my substance threw
To feed the fraudulent and tempt the weak.
Ruggiero, with what glittering words soe'er
We smear the selfishness of waste, and count
Our careless tossings bounties, this is sure,
Man sinks not by a more unmanly vice
Than is that vice of prodigality—
Man finds not more dishonour than in debt.

RUGGIERO.

Farewell my function! I perceive that now
You need no more a monitor. To me,
Who, when the past was present, sigh'd to see it,
The present brings its joy. One work is wrought;
Adversity hath borne its best of fruits;
And, issuing from this gorge, the tract you tread,
Though it be ne'er so beggarly and shorn,
Shall lie, I augur, in the sunshine.

SILISCO.

No;
Not in the sunshine; that may never be;
Upon my path the sun shall shine no more.

It is not poverty will darken it —
In many another point I erred, but not
In deeming wealth to me was little worth ;
Nor self-reproach — for this, though sharp, will work
Its own purgation ; nor the world's contempt,
Which with a light and friendly disregard
I soon could conquer. But one hope there was
That in the darkness and the frosty air
Burnt brighter still and brighter, which is now
Set, not to rise again. In this I own
Needful severity ; for this apart
My joyfulness of nature had escaped
The hands of justice, and all worldly ills
Had left me unchastised.

RUGGIERO.

Rosalba false !

SILISCO.

No, say not so — she means not to be false.
No — falseness could no more have place in her
Than could the cankerworm in Paradise.
She promis'd, it is true, till All-Saints-Eve
To hold herself in freedom unbetroth'd ;

'Tis likewise true, or publicly proclaim'd,
Count Ugo is to marry her to-morrow.
But doubtless she has deem'd herself releas'd
By my desertion. Since that fatal night
She knows of me no more than that I vanish'd;
For how could I, a beggar, plead to her,
An heiress, her past promise? With what aim?
Since should she wait the term, the issue still
Must be obedience to her sire's behest.
And what can now move *him?*

RUGGIERO.

I know not what.
But what we know not of may haply be.
And this I know,—what rules the true of heart
Is plighted faith, not circumstance. To morrow?
I think it may be done—Ronzino's legs
Will carry me if legs of mortal steed
Can span the distance in the time—and so
My presence and my protest shall precede
This woeful wedding.—Yes, ere noon to-morrow,
Before Rosalba face to face I'll stand,
And, be it at the altar's foot, oppose

Her prior promise to her marriage vow.
Leandro, ho! my horse.

SILISCO.

At least there's truth
In friendship. But be gentle to Rosalba.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Street in Palermo. — A Festal Procession is seen issuing from the Church in the distance and advancing.

Enter a Chorus of Maidens with baskets of flowers, followed by a Chorus of Youths, and TRIBOLO, *the* KING'S FOOL.

CHORUS OF MAIDENS.

Who shall lack a lover? Lo!
She held a hundred in her chains;
They must break them now and go
Where new loves shall pay their pains.

But who shall hail
Their cast-off faces pale?
Who yield her charms
To their dejected eyes and nerveless arms?
Not I, nor I,
Nor none of us;
And should they try,
We'd pelt them thus.

[*Flinging flowers at the other chorus.*

TRIBOLO.

Well said, Virgins! Look at me if you would see a colour;—and there's an arm for you! "Let me alone, villain, I cannot draw my breath," said the she-rhinoceros when I put it round her waist. But is there no answer?

CHORUS OF YOUTHS.

We bent the knee before her,
With a worship nigh to sin,
Predestin'd to adore her,
Without a hope to win.
But having known the dear delight
Of living in her sunny sight,
'Twere vain
That we should strain
Against the pressure of that golden chain;

For we are prisoners in Despair's despite:
And as for trying what our eyes could do,
Or what our arms, with you,
We could not, scornful maidens, if we might.

TRIBOLO.

Hapless Bachelors! But I like you well; for though you counterfeit a lovesickness, yet you are clad in all the colours of the rainbow, and you sing like peacocks. Come along! You must perform this at the Palace. Come, musical maidens and men of many colours. Sing in time and you shall be rewarded in eternity,—not to mention a puncheon of strong ale which stands abroach for you at the buttery.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter RUGGIERO *with an Innkeeper.*

RUGGIERO.

Brought fairly to the ground! I prithee give the poor beast a can of wine, and when his courage shall come back, take him to the stable of the Palazzo Arona. Do thy best for him, and take this for thy pains.

[*Exit Innkeeper.*

Poor Ronzino! thou sufferest for the sins of others. What festal troop is this? Ha! my mind misgives me!

[*The procession crosses the stage; two citizens detach themselves from it, and stand beside* RUGGIERO.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Enough of this! I'll follow no further. Foh! 'Tis a filthy crowd!

SECOND CITIZEN.

The sun is hot, and the garlick, which yesterday was like a flower of the field, is to-day the least of a little unsavoury. At night there is to be a masked ball at the Palace, in honour of the wedding.

FIRST CITIZEN.

If I were a nobleman, and bidden, I would not dance at it.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Why so?

FIRST CITIZEN.

It is such a wedding as no man that dances with consideration would dance at.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Wherefore? It is magnificently managed, and no cost spared.

FIRST CITIZEN.

It is a wicked wedding. The bride is the sweetest incomparable lady that ever the sun shined upon, and the bridegroom ——

SECOND CITIZEN.

Well?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Is a pink-headed, white-haired old gentleman; very corpulent; with one foot in the grave and the other in a velvet shoe. Did you mark him as he stood at the altar, leaning upon his staff? He was three minutes groping in his pouch for the ring, and at last he fished up—what? a pair of spectacles!

SECOND CITIZEN.

He is a simple-hearted, kindly gentleman — meek and mild — but, as you say, very old, and not strong in the legs. Let us to the royal gardens, and make sure of places to see the fireworks.

RUGGIERO.

What marriage is it that you speak of, friends?
Count Ugo's?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Yes.

RUGGIERO.

And did ye say the King
Gives a masked ball to-night?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Sir, so we hear.

[*Exeunt Citizens.*

RUGGIERO.

Too late—too late! Yet shall the truth be heard!
Though what is irremediable be done,
Let what is just be spoken. To that ball
Shall come a dreary and unwelcome guest.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

An Antechamber with folding doors, opening upon a Ball-Room in the Royal Palace at Palermo.—THE KING, *masked as a Knight of St. John; and* LISANA, *as a Minstrel.*

THE KING.

Young minstrel, had thy ditty been less sweet
I should have bid thee sing me one less sad;
But thou hast so subdued me to thy strain,
I crave another like it.

LISANA.

Sooth, my Lord,
It is but such that I can sing; I 'm young,
Untaught, and have but a few natural notes:
I sing but as the birds do, from my heart.

THE KING.

Well, sing from that again. Thy voice awakes
A tenderness that might be troublesome,
And shame to show itself by day; but tears
That come at twilight like a summer dew,
May trickle unrestrain'd. Sing once again.

LISANA *sings.*

I.

The morning broke, and Spring was there,
And lusty Summer near her birth;
The birds awoke and wak'd the air,
The flow'rs awoke and wak'd the earth.

II.

Up! quoth he, what joy for me
On dewy plain, in budding brake!
A sweet bird sings on every tree,
And flowers are sweeter for my sake.

III.

Lightly o'er the plain he stept,
Lightly brush'd he through the wood,
And snar'd a little bird that slept,
And had not waken'd when she should.

IV.

Lightly through the wood he brush'd,
Lightly stept he o'er the plain,
And yet—a little flow'r was crush'd
That never rais'd its head again.

THE KING.

That voice had won me were I blind; that face,
Though I were deaf, had spoken to my heart!

I am asham'd to say what love is mine
For thee, and of what temper. Jesu Mary!
That I, a King, God help me! should so waste
The night, the dawn, the noon, the dewy eve
In this sweet serious idleness of love.
The masquers thicken, and such songs as these
Are not for ev'ry ear. See! through this door
There is a private chamber. Come with me.

[*Exeunt the* KING *and* LISANA.

Enter RUGGIERO, *masked as Conscience, with a lamp and scourge.*

RUGGIERO.

Surely I know that voice! Lisana's, if I err not. And that Knight of St. John was the King. Poor girl! she is in the toils, and they glisten in her eyes like a cobweb dew-bespangled. A word of warning in her father's ear were not ill bestowed; and doubtless he will be here anon.

Enter divers Maskers, passing through to the Ball-Room, and others passing out.

FIRST MASK.

Marco, I think? Yes, I know you by the wave of your feather. What, have you danced?

SECOND MASK.

Ay; but methinks these festivities are somewhat sadly carried. See'st thou the bride yonder? By my faith, she stands more like a marble statue in a mist, than a bride of flesh and blood. There—have you seen her, Sir? (*to Ruggiero*) Ah, now she slinks behind the crowd.

RUGGIERO.

In truth a pitiable spectacle!
I marvel, Sir, what pleasure Age can take
So airily to deck its dim decline.
A chaplet of forc'd flowers on Winter's brow
Seems not less inharmonious to me
Than the untimely snow on the green leaf.

SECOND MASK.

Why, Sir, it is a common error of age to think that it can get back the enjoyment of youth by getting what only youth can enjoy.

FIRST MASK.

Nay, but this was a match of Ubaldo's making, not of Ugo's. We are here to dance; so pass on, I pray you.

[*All pass into the ball-room except* RUGGIERO *and one Mask.*

RUGGIERO.

Gerbetto, no?

GERBETTO.

The same, Sir; and can I mistake the voice of the Count of Arona?

RUGGIERO.

Make me not known, Gerbetto. But when we pass in, do thy endeavour to draw the Countess out of the crowd to where I shall stand apart. Know you, Gerbetto, that your daughter hath secret conference with the King?

GERBETTO.

You say not so, my Lord?

RUGGIERO.

I do; and though the maiden be as modest as the rosebud's inmost leaf, yet I like not the sun and the south-west wind to play with her.

GERBETTO.

You are right, my Lord; and I shall beseech you to give me your counsel. But lo! the crowd divides, and if we take the occasion . . . .

RUGGIERO.

Pass in, I pray.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

The Ball-Room, with various groups of Maskers.—In front UGO *and* ROSALBA *as bridegroom and bride, with* UBALDO *and* FIORDELIZA. GERRETTO *joins them.* RUGGIERO *is discovered a little apart.* TRIBOLO, *the* KING'S FOOL, *appears in his usual habit.*

UBALDO.

More lights, I tell you! If a canary bird were here she would hardly sing. Strike up, musicians! We suffer more in the tuning of your fiddles than the music's worth. If the King be taken up into heaven, 'tis well; but as we see him neither here nor there, 'tis no wonder if our guests shall not disport themselves as merrily as they are wont.

UGO.

If an old man can do aught to make them merry, I would fain be assisting.

UBALDO.

Old! why the day makes us all young.

FIORDELIZA.

If your good Lordship would assist me, I pray you to find me a discreet and nimble gentleman to dance with.

UGO.

I will, sweet Lady.

ROSALBA.

My friend, my Fiordeliza, leave me not.

FIORDELIZA.

Come hither, Fool. How is it that thou com'st to the King's masked ball without a mask?

TRIBOLO.

Please your sweet Ladyship, my sister told me the solemnity was of that nature that I should show it my countenance, and not my mask.

FIORDELIZA.

Thy sister? I knew not thou hadst a sister. Who is she?

TRIBOLO.

The world calls her Wisdom. The wisdom of the world, my Lady, was ever born-sister to a fool.

FIORDELIZA.

The fool were no fool that should own that.

53619

TRIBOLO.

Then there is my mask, and the fool is no fool for the occasion.

GERBETTO (*to Ruggiero in the side scene*).

She says she must know who you are before she shall speak with you apart.

RUGGIERO.

Then be it openly, and not apart.

FIORDELIZA.

Fool, thou art melancholy.

TRIBOLO.

No wonder, Lady, if you consider my dreams last night.

FIORDELIZA.

What didst thou dream?

TRIBOLO.

I dreamt I was a tailor going to be married, and that I went to church sitting cross-legged a-top of a hearse and stitching at my shroud.

FIORDELIZA.

Was that all?

TRIBOLO.

No. I dreamt that I was a thousand miles out at sea, sitting astride of an empty cask, and a beauteous sea-nymph bobbing before me; but I could not come at her.

UBALDO.

The King, doubtless, hath his own amusements, and we will wait no longer. Ho! gallants, gallants, match ye for the dance! strike up, musicians! Serve a bumper round. Ho! gallants, follow me; this way, this way.

RUGGIERO (*advancing*).

Pass ye no further till my voice be heard.

UBALDO.

What voice is that? a merry mask I trow.
Well, speak; I like the humour of thy mask,
Though it be dismal. Whom dost thou present?

RUGGIERO.

Sirs, I am CONSCIENCE. With this lamp I search
The hearts of sinners, with this scourge chastise.
Men feast, men dance, men revel,—but I come.
The shouts of jollity and riot rise;
But what though jollity and riot shout,

My knock is heard, and let me in they must.
For wheresoever Evil enters, there
I follow with my lamp, and Evil thus
Is palpable, or by his substance seen,
Or by his shadow. Then my lamp I lift
As now I lift it—yea, I lift my lamp,
And lift my scourge—for therefore am I here.
Musicians, cease; ye dancers, cease to dance,
Trampling ye know not what beneath your feet.
What ye with noise and dancing celebrate
Are vows by prior vows made perfidy—
A heartless, faithless show of plighted faith.

UBALDO.

What masking call ye this? A mask indeed
That masks a railer and a villain. Ho!
Tear off this caitiff's mask—tear off his mask.

GERBETTO (*supporting Rosalba*).

Sirs, she wants air—I pray you stand aside.

FIORDELIZA.

Cheerly, my sweet Rosalba! Villain!

UGO.

Run,
Fetch that elixir . . .

UBALDO.

Tear me off his mask;
Tear off the villain's mask;

RUGGIERO.

Ye shall not need.
[*Unmasking.*

FIORDELIZA.

Ruggiero!

FIRST MASK.

What! the Count?

SECOND MASK.

'Tis he indeed!

THIRD MASK.

As strangely found as lost!

FOURTH MASK.

Most wonderful!

UGO.

Who is it, Sirs? who is it? for my eyes . . . .

UBALDO.

I would that mine were dimmer than they are.
My Lord, or e'er thou ask me to unsay
The name I gave thee in thy mask, say thou
Wherefore thou troublest thus our marriage feast.

RUGGIERO.

Say what you please, and unsay what you will.
Silisco lov'd your daughter, she lov'd him;
And pledg'd her faith that this side All-Saints-Eve
She would not wed another. I demand
Why walks she here a bride?

UBALDO.

This outrage grows!
Who says she lov'd?

ROSALBA.

Father, I did, I did.

UBALDO.

Or pledg'd her faith?

ROSALBA.

I did, but he was false.

FIORDELIZA.

Gerbetto knows it — and he slew the espous'd
Of her with whom he traffick'd.

GERBETTO.

Sir, 'tis true;
He slew him in the caverns.

RUGGIERO.

Oh, sad chance!
Disastrous error! Was it this betray'd
The maiden's faith! Why then shall pity plead
Against all anger. Whom he slew I know,—
A wretch who, for the plunder of his ship,
Sent to the bottom her and all her crew,
By name Spadone. In the Catacombs,
Silisco, hiding from his creditors,
Met—innocently met, by accident—
Spadone's paramour. By him assail'd,
He, certes, slew him.

UBALDO.

At the point of death
Spadone said . . . .

RUGGIERO.

What like enough he thought;
For with a hundred murders did he reek,
And foulest thoughts were uppermost. But lo!
If any here shall say Silisco's soul
Was not as pure as infant's at the breast,
True as confessing saints,—there is my glove—
I'll prove upon his body that he lies.

Three KNIGHTS *come forward.*

FIRST KNIGHT.

There be three here will take this quarrel up
Upon the bride's behalf.

ROSALBA.

Oh, not on mine!
My cause is bad—I broke my promise—oh!
Silisco, ever, evermore belov'd!
Forgive me! oh forgive me! I was false,
And thou wert faithfuller than the constant fire
That burns the centre!

UBALDO.

Daughter! art thou mad?

FIORDELIZA.

She faints, she falls.

GERBETTO.

Make room—to the air—to the air!

[ROSALBA *is taken out by* GERBETTO *and* FIORDELIZA.

UBALDO.

See, Sir, your mischief prospers. But the King
Shall know of this, and instantly. My friends,

Ye see how this, which should have been a feast,
By this man's meddling insolence is marr'd.
This shall the King redress; and some time hence
We'll have our pastime; for this present, Sirs,
Your further aid I ask not. Fare you well!

[*Exit.*

UGO.

Before ye go, Sirs, pray you hear me speak.
For I am sorely troubled, yea, my heart
Is full of grief. I knew not, Sirs, till now
Of this sweet lady's love, nor of her pledge
Given, as this lord avouches, to his friend,
That worthy knight, my Lord of Malespina.
Sirs, had I known it, not for worlds and worlds
Would I have done her that discourtesy
To force myself upon her to her wrong.
Sirs, what I can I will for her relief.
I call you all to witness, I renounce
All rights from this day's injury deriv'd.
I'll never more approach her.

RUGGIERO.

Noble Sir,
Your pardon, if I wrong'd you.

UGO.

Nay, not so.
The sorrows of this day are born of sin,
A secret sin, whereof to cleanse my soul
I hasten now. I pray you help me hence.
Forth on a perilous pilgrimage I go,
Sorely to suffer for my sore offence.

RUGGIERO.

Count, think not I accuse you . . . .

UGO.

No, Sir, no;
My sin is other than against this maid,
Whom, verily, I married for her good,
Her sire protesting 'twas her will—no less
For her own good than that exceeding love
I bore her and shall ever bear—and now
There's nothing I can suffer that my soul
Shall not rejoice to suffer, even to death,
If haply so appeasing God, He shower
A blessing on that lady and her love.

[*Exit, followed by all except* RUGGIERO.

RUGGIERO.

A gallant and magnanimous old man!
Much injury have I done him, God forgive me!
In thinking slightly of his slender wit,
By greatness of his heart so glorified.
Till now I knew not he had utterance;
But generous sorrows and high purposes
Make the dumb speak. Ye orators, note that,
That in the workshop of your head weave words.

Enter GERBETTO.

GERBETTO.

Strange day is this! My Lord, the aged Count
Prepares, in sackcloth clad, to issue forth
The city gates, afoot and unattended,
To seek the Holy Sepulchre. A vow
Made this day three years, when his former wife
Lay sick to death, did bind him, as he says,
Within three years in such wise to perform
This pilgrimage, the disregard whereof
He deems to be the cause of this day's griefs.
And therefore, ere the stroke of twelve foreclose
Upon his pledge, he needs will take his way
Alone, on foot, toward Jerusalem.

RUGGIERO.

A brave resolve! but which to execute
His body is unequal. Ere he reach
A three days' journey, he shall fall by the way.
He must be follow'd though he know it not,
And tended at his need. Wilt thou do this?

GERBETTO.

I will, my Lord; nor shall it hold me long;
I know the nature of his maladies;
Scarce for one week can they sustain the toil
Of journeying afoot. But, good my Lord,
I pray you, whether it be days or months,
Be careful, in my absence, of my child;
Fulfil her father's duties, and defeat
The King's designs, if evil.

RUGGIERO.

Ah, the King!
I know that dangerous softness of the King,
And how it works in issue. Lovingly,
Like a tame tiger, that long licks the hand
Till he draw blood, then maddens, doth he now
Fondle Lisana. He shall not draw blood
Whilst blood of mine is living in my veins.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Palace at Palermo—UBALDO *and* THE CHIEF JUSTICIARY.

UBALDO.

This passion, Sir, for this doctor's daughter, which is lost, is, to speak privately, a kind of madness in the King; and it is a madness which many moons have shined upon. It is now nigh upon six since the maiden was seen last, being, I think, the night of my daughter's marriage, when Gerbetto, her father, followed in Count Ugo's wake to Jerusalem. As for these charges against the Count of Arona, touching matters of accompt and malversations, they are but colourable. The true ground of the proceedings is a species of jealousy and amorous rage against the Count, who, it is certain, for fault of some employment that should better commend his virtue and dis-

cretion, did very strangely carry off this doctor's daughter, and holds her somewhere in concealment.

THE CHIEF JUSTICIARY.

The King, as you say, my Lord, speaking privately, must be clean lunatic to make this ado about a doctor's daughter; seeing that he might disport himself at his pleasure with a hundred doctor's daughters, not to say a hundred ladies of greater estimation and nobility. Nevertheless, the lunacy of a King must be respected, and I do continually what in me lies to discover where the wench is concealed, and to take the person of the Count.

UBALDO.

Truly the Count shall be no loss at the Council Board; for his words went for more than they were worth with the King, and in matters of statecraft he was but a pedant. I have my own conceit of this matter, which squares not with the King's; and notwithstanding the Count's exorbitancy in the carrying off of a wench, I deem that he is more likely to be found in an old track than in a new one. I would have you set a watch upon the Lady Fiordeliza; and

where the hen-bird hath her nest, you may look for the cock to come.

THE CHIEF JUSTICIARY.

I will take your Lordship's guidance. Know you where the Lady Fiordeliza may be met with?

UBALDO.

She hath lately gone to sojourn for a season with my daughter, who lives like a nun since her marriage; and hath chosen for her nunnery the Castle of Malespina, which fell to Count Ugo in satisfaction of the debt due to him from the former Lord of it, that castaway, Silisco. There, I think, she will be found, and he thereabouts.

THE CHIEF JUSTICIARY.

There shall he be sought. If your good Lordship will bring me to the King, I will crave his signature to these warrants.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Castle of Malespina—ROSALBA *and* FIORDELIZA.

FIORDELIZA.

Does nothing ever happen in this castle? I have been gazing up the great avenue for an hour and more, trying to think that there was a Knight Errant pricking forward at the further end; but I saw only two rabbits that crossed the road in a leisurely manner on their affairs, and a squirrel which, for want of something to do, jumped from one tree and flung itself into the arms of another over the way. Look at Lion; he sleeps away his second childhood at the gate; and if you hear a grunt, 'tis that he dreams of his younger days, when once upon a time he saw a stranger and barked. For myself, my only companion is the ancient steward, and his only topic is the wholesomeness of the air; a commendation which I dare not deny, inasmuch as all the persons I have seen beside himself, are ten serving men whose joint ages are nine hundred and thirty-six.

ROSALBA.

I wish the castle could be made more cheerful for you; but how can it, the present Lord of it being so far away on so perilous an enterprise, and the late Lord . . . Oh Fiordeliza! are the imaginations of my heart very wicked when they wander after him?

FIORDELIZA.

You know best. How should I take the measure of their wickedness?

ROSALBA.

It is doubt and fear which keep my thoughts so busy. If I did but know more about him I should think less.

FIORDELIZA.

Something, then, you do know?

ROSALBA.

Shall I tell you? Yes. In a summer-house which was once a temple — you can see the corner of it yonder in the wood on the other side of the brook — is a statue of Silisco, made when he was a boy. A statue of Antinoüs stands opposite to it, and Silisco's is the more beautiful of the two. On the evening after my arrival, as I was looking upon it,

I descried in the fold, where the hand joins the drapery, a thread of silk, fastened to which was this scroll.

FIORDELIZA.

Oh, let me see it.

ROSALBA.

No, Fiordeliza, I cannot give it you. See, you will tear it.

FIORDELIZA (*reading*).

" *Here my footsteps must not be*
After this my infancy.
They shall wander far and wide,
By pleasure tempted first and tried;
Then by passion, which with wings
Shall lift them where the skylark sings;
Anguish and repentance next
Back shall drive them sore perplex'd.
Whither then? A grateful mind
A grateful work shall seek and find.
When heroic ardour reigns
In an old man's shrivell'd veins,
Youthful veins were sham'd indeed
If they bled not where his bleed."

He has been here then.

ROSALBA.

From the farmer on the demesne I learn, that from about the time of Silisco's disappearance from Palermo, there lodged at the Farm a person of a light, lofty, and graceful appearance, courteous and winning of demeanour, who answers to Silisco in every thing, except that he was not gay, but pensive and retiring. He went hence, no one knows whither, on the day of my arrival.

FIORDELIZA.

I wish he would come back. Is there no hope of him?

ROSALBA.

None, Fiordeliza, none.

FIORDELIZA.

Why then I return to my former aspiration, and I wish for any Knight Errant that it may please Providence to send us.

ROSALBA.

You said once that flowers and sunshine were enough for you.

FIORDELIZA.

While the sun is hot and the flowers are happy. But look at yonder sunflower on one side the arch, how it hangs its head! and at the hollyhock leaning over from the other; they are heart-broken about the last carnation, poor thing! for it died yesterday. This gusty wind, which is getting up, is to sing its dirge. Lo! See! There *is* a Knight Errant!

ROSALBA.

Where?

FIORDELIZA.

Behind that mountain-ash; when the wind waves it, you'll see him. There—and I protest I believe he is very handsome. He seems as if he did not know which way to go. Send some one . . . . . .

ROSALBA.

I see no Knight Errant.

FIORDELIZA.

How blind you are!—there—there.

ROSALBA.

That, my dear? That is the scarecrow which I told

Girolamo to put there yesterday, to keep the blackbirds from the gourds.

FIORDELIZA.

How can you be so unkind, Rosalba! Everybody deceives me, and I know the scarecrow was put there on purpose. However.

ROSALBA.

Nay, you deceived yourself now; and I cannot think that you have ever been deceived by another. I should not quarrel with you for seeing that which is not, if you would but believe in that which is; for, trust me, it is when we are most faithless that we are most deceived. Believe in Ruggiero, and you will have present peace and a reward to come. To me experience has given a sharp schooling against distrust, and I will never again let the world's outcry and the masking of circumstance get the better of a faithful instinct.

FIORDELIZA.

I never did so yet; and when the world and circumstance commended Ruggiero for a young nobleman of

excellent discretion and infinite sobriety, my faithful instinct told me, there is something wicked here.

Morn, that look'st so grim and grey,
Tell me truly, tell me truly,
What wilt thou be ere mid-day?
Who can say, who can say?
Flaunting forth in garments gay,
Darting beams unruly,
Darting beams unruly.

No, no; when he ran off with Lisana, it was but a clenching and confirming.

ROSALBA.

They disappeared together; whether he took her away I know not; but if he did, it was for no evil purpose.

FIORDELIZA.

Oh no, none. Doubtless he withdrew with her to the desert, for a season of fasting and humiliation.

Enter MARIANA.

MARIANA.

Please you, my Lady, the Falconer sends his duty, and Alathiella has not touched her food for three days. He is fearful she will die, and he says the Count gave a thousand crowns for her.

ROSALBA.

Poor bird! she doted on her master, and has never held up her head since she missed him. I fear she will die, like some of her betters, of a broken heart.

MARIANA.

He says he knows but of one thing to do with her, which is to take her to the Conjurer at the Farm.

FIORDELIZA.

The Conjurer! who is he?

MARIANA.

Have you not heard of him, my Lady? 'Tis the strangest story!

FIORDELIZA.

If there be anything strange left us here below, I prithee tell of it; for I thought that every-day droppings had worn the world as smooth as a wash-ball. How came a conjurer to the Farm?

MARIANA.

I will tell you, my Lady. It was the very night of the going off of the wart on my thumb, and the day after the worm in Maria's nose put out horns, Dame Agata, being in her first sleep, heard a great rushing

of swings; and so says she to her husband, "Osporco, either the Devil is hereabouts, or there's a cock-chafer;" and then there came a knock. So, says she, "Wait to see if they knock again, and if they do, put your blunderbuss out at the window, and ask if there's any thing wanted." Well, the knock came a second time, and then a third; and Osporco looked out and saw a tall man in a horseman's cloak, which said he lacked a lodging; and as he was but one by himself, they let him in, and he has lodged there ever since.

ROSALBA.

But is he a Conjurer?

MARIANA.

Surely, my Lady, no one but a Conjurer was ever heard of to come flying through the air in that way. And besides that, he is a magnificent man to look at, and orders this and orders that, as though he held the powers of the air at his bidding. And then he wanders out by moonlight a-culling of simples; and he heals the sick; and they come to him from ten miles round, though Father Fungoso tells them it were better to die and be saved than be healed and be

damned. But the Falconer says that, be it as it may with us, Alathiella has no soul to trouble her, and she may take any cure she can come by.

FIORDELIZA.

Well, I do not believe he is a Conjurer, or that it will hurt us to heal us. Rosalba, I am sick.

ROSALBA.

Of what, my love? of solitude or of my society?

FIORDELIZA.

I must send for this stranger.

ROSALBA.

Oh, then I know what ails you. It is curiosity.

FIORDELIZA.

I say I am sick; very grievous sick. Mariana, send word of it to the Farm, and say that the stranger must come with all the speed he can.

MARIANA.

I will say, with what speed he can in the way of nature; but he must not come rushing through the air with wings.

FIORDELIZA.

In the way of nature will serve. I shall live till he comes in a natural way. But I will give the orders myself. Tell Girolamo to attend me in the conservatory. Come, Rosalba.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Farmstead at Malespina — RUGGIERO *alone.*

RUGGIERO.

So flies the year, and flying fades. The Sun
Comes not so like a bridegroom from his bed,
And Nature greets him with a changing cheek.
The willows wash their tresses in the brook
That shrank before, but swells to meet them now;
The plane-tree leaf is piebald with black blots;
Upon the snowberry-bush the big drops bead;
And the goose plants starr'd patterns of her foot
In the moist clay. Swift, changeful year, pass on;
Sweet was the savour of thy prime, and sweet
Should be thy fruitage. But the wild boar breaks . . .

Enter OSPORCO, *the Farmer.*

Good morrow, friend; the air hath some taste now of the sharpness of the season.

OSPORCO.

Ay, Sir; the cat sits in the sunniest window-pane, and the bees have left the rosier for the ivy. Well, every man his own sunshine, is what I say; and your friend that left us at shearing time . . . . Ah! he was a friendly-hearted gentleman — and very noble, Sir, very noble; you would have thought yourself at court; he would hand a chair to my wife as though she were the queen of the land: and when he went away, my daughters wept like waterspouts — I thought some of them would have died of it, and I have but thirteen. My Lady at the Castle (God be good to her!) often asks me about him, and I tell her if I were a Countess, I would give him one hundred ducats a year to sit over against me at meal-times, just to look at.

RUGGIERO.

Then might she forget her food and be famished unawares. I think I know whither our friend is gone;

and, barring accidents of the road and the hazards of long journeyings in foreign parts, it may not be long ere we see him.

OSPORCO.

Tell that to my youngest daughter, and you shall see her quiver again with joy like the tail of a lamb that sucks. But I forget my errand. There is an old man at the cottage, Sir, which cannot be persuaded but that you can make him young again if you please, he has heard so much of your skill in curing divers diseases; and there is a young woman that hath a quandary.

RUGGIERO.

A what?

OSPORCO.

A quandary, she calls it; but, indeed, I think it is a crack somewhere. And Gambo, the grazier, hath brought you his wife, that hath the ringworm on her finger and the rattlesnake in her tongue, and prays you would take and cure her: but, indeed, if you cure her he cares not that you should take her, and if you take her he cares not that you should cure her.

RUGGIERO.

You are merry, my friend.

OSPORCO.

The frosty air, Sir. But, to speak soberly, there are at the cottage no fewer than fifteen men, women, and children, which think you can cure any thing, and have come to be cured of their simplicities.

RUGGIERO.

I will attend them. I have said often, and I say it again, that my doctor's lore is but the scattered lights that came across me in my studies and meditations. But if they can reach no better skill, they may command mine.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Lane in the Neighbourhood of the Castle of Malespina—A PROVOST *and two* MARSHALSMEN.

PROVOST.

We must by no means follow him in; for being the castle of the great Chamberlain's daughter, t'were an offence to enter it.

FIRST MARSHALSMAN.

On the King's errand?

PROVOST.

Better for such as we to look to the Chamberlain than to the King. If a man would prosper, he should be more nimble to please those near above him than those far above him. Even were the King to remember a small service, it should hardly fall in his way to befriend us.

SECOND MARSHALSMAN.

He would not so much as know our names.

PROVOST.

Moreover, it is better to do no man a displeasure, than to do any man a good turn. For you may be sure of reprisals; but who can count upon rewards?

SECOND MARSHALSMAN.

Truly there are ten revengeful men for one that is thankful.

PROVOST.

Therefore, though we could take the Count no other way, I would not follow him into the Castle. But if

we watch for him as he comes out, we cannot miss him; and if we do not tarry long we may get half-way through the forest with him before nightfall.

FIRST MARSHALSMAN.

Sleeping at St. Elmo's in the forest to-night, we should reach the court on Wednesday.

SECOND MARSHALSMAN.

Then we are to ensconce ourselves here.

PROVOST.

Behind yonder bushes, close to the gate.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

The Castle of Malespina — FIORDELIZA *and* MARIANA.

FIORDELIZA.

Not if he came back to you weeping, and went on his knees to be forgiven?

MARIANA.

No, my Lady; if Giovanni were to do so by me, I should say, once gone and gone for ever.

FIORDELIZA.

'Twere to be of a most unchristian spirit, if he were truly penitent and thou should'st not forgive him.

MARIANA.

I would forgive him: but I would kill him first.

FIORDELIZA.

That were indeed to temper justice with mercy. Only the justice should be sharp and the mercy something tardy. Come, Mariana; you are in the bud still,—green and hard. I remember, I, too, when I was young . . .

MARIANA.

Why, my Lady, eighteen is not old.

FIORDELIZA.

When I was young I was of your way of thinking. I used to say to myself, You and I, my good Fiordeliza, will not trouble our hearts about mankind, unless they should cling to us, and cleave to us, and lick the dust from our feet. But change grows out of time as a plant grows out of the earth, and in a year or two we are no more like what we were than the blade is like

the seed. Adversity tames us, Mariana, as winter tames the birds. Do I look pale and sick?

MARIANA.

No, my Lady. A little pale, it may be, but not sick.

FIORDELIZA.

That is not as it should be. The Conjurer will not believe me, and he will be here anon. Shut out the light a little. Now go fetch me my scarf, to muffle me up.

[*Exit* MARIANA.

I'm but the mimic of my former self,
And wretchedly I do the imitation!
Ruggiero! oh Ruggiero! bitterer tears
Than tenderer women weep, I weep for thee;
And thou, with all thine insight, never saw'st
Their source, it lies so secret and so deep.
Oh, much I wrong'd thee! many a time and oft
I wounded thee through petulance and pride,
And love's delight in sporting with its prey,
And wayward wilfulness; but though a child
In frowardness and mischief, I was still
A woman in my love—and, oh, compare
Man's love with that, and see how thin the thread,

How frail the tissue! Me nor wounds nor slights,
Insults nor injuries, nor life nor death,
Could e'er have sunder'd. Yes, 'tis gone, 'tis past, —
Past and he knows not, and will never know,
What treasures of the mine were hidden beneath
The wild-flowers and the weeds! For ever gone!
Methinks that I could weep no less for him
Than for myself, that he should lose my love,
It is so great and deep. But what cares he?
He has Lisana's. Had he been but cold,
I could have borne it — but so false, so false!

Re-enter MARIANA.

MARIANA.

The Conjurer has come.

FIORDELIZA.

Oh, has he? Here —
Look — wrap this round me; so, — now bring him in.
[*Exit* MARIANA.
If he should prove a soothsayer indeed,
He'll draw the curtain from this mystery,
And tell me both what present harbour holds
Ruggiero, and what fate the future breeds

For him and me. I trust it is no sin,
Seeking to soothsayers in such straits as mine;
But if it be, I must. Yet I shall blush
To question him. I'll turn away my face,
And seem to be, what verily I believe
I shall be soon, by mortal sickness seiz'd.
Then, after, I'll revive.

[*Lies down on a Couch.*

Enter RUGGIERO.

RUGGIERO.

Softly, she sleeps.
Oh, blessed Sleep! what art can vie with thine
In healing of the sick! oh, pious Sleep,
Sister of mercy! nurse her back to health.
She stirs! Have I awaken'd her?

FIORDELIZA.

Some spell
Of wond'rous potency he mutters now;
For at his voice there comes a gushing up
Of twenty bubbling springs that fill my breast
With joys of other days. Sir, if your art
Can track diseases to their caves, I pray you

Pronounce of mine, and whether in the mind
It kennels, or the body; for the print
Might either way incline me.

RUGGIERO.

Fiordeliza.

FIORDELIZA.

Who calls me? Now I know that I am mad.
What voice is that?

RUGGIERO.

The voice of one who once
Could please you, and though that may no more be,
Would still bestead you.

FIORDELIZA.

'Tis his voice! Ruggiero!

RUGGIERO.

Forgive me, Fiordeliza, if the charm
Of some deceitful hours too quickly past,
Too slowly parted with, misled my steps
To haunt your whereabout. Forgive me, you.
I, should I minister to your present need,
Would then forgive myself. What ails you?

FIORDELIZA.

Me?

A headache—nothing—nothing you can cure.
You minister to me! I thank you,—no:
If need were I could die; but, prais'd be God,
I am not in extremity. A quip
That put me in good humour, were a cure
For all that ails me.

RUGGIERO.

Then the word was false
They brought?

FIORDELIZA.

'Twas falser than the father of lies,
If it cried "help" to you.

RUGGIERO.

No need of this;
Of vehement disavowal there's no need
To undeceive me had I thought you kind.
I have but to recal the past.

FIORDELIZA.

What past?
Speak out your quarrel with the past; and I

Will tell you of my quarrel with the present.
I was kind once unless my memory errs,
And if I seem'd to change without a cause,
What since has follow'd shows that cause enough
There might have been; for aught I know, there was.
How read you then the history of the past
To make me seem too harsh?

RUGGIERO.

How read I it?

I read it but as they that run may read;
A tale of no uncustomary kind.
The love whose dawn beheld its earliest glow
Reflected, as it rose to perfect day,
Saw the bright colouring of the vaporous cloud
Grow pale and disappear. My springing love,
So long as it was pleasant, light, and free,
Was prosperous; but it pass'd too soon to passion.
I could not make a plaything of my love;
I could not match it with your sportive moods,
'Till garlands should be conjur'd into chains;
I could not lightly agitate and fan
The airier motions of an amorous fancy,
And by a skill in blowing hot and cold

And changeful dalliance, quicken you with doubts,
And keep you in the dark till you should kindle.
I was not ignorant that arts like these
Avail, when bare simplicity of love
Falls flat; but be they strong or weak, these means
Were none of mine, and though my heart should break,
(As humbly I believe it will not,) still
More willingly would I suffer by such arts
Than practise them.

FIORDELIZA.

Have I then practis'd arts?
One art I know,—to judge men by their acts,
And not their seemings. I should not be loth
Some faults to own, Ruggiero, did I know
That he to whom I own'd them would own his.
But there should be a justice in confession.
Yours is the greater fault; confess you first.

RUGGIERO.

Most fully, frankly, freely, from the heart
Will I pour out confessions. I am proud,
Inflexible, undutiful, self-will'd,

In anger violent, of a moody mind,
And latterly morose; what further? sad,
Severe, vindictive.

FIORDELIZA.

How confession loves
To fight with shadows, whilst the substance flies.
You have not said that in a slippery hour
You stain'd a maiden's honour and your own.

RUGGIERO.

That which I have not said, I have not done.

FIORDELIZA.

Where is Lisana?

RUGGIERO.

Wheresoe'er she be,
Her innocence is with her.

FIORDELIZA.

But where is she?

RUGGIERO.

Secrets that are my own you may command.
This is another's.

FIORDELIZA.

You refuse to tell.

RUGGIERO.

It is but for a season I refuse.
I may not tell you till St. Michael's Eve.
But then I may.

FIORDELIZA.

Gramercy for the boon!
Seek, Sir, henceforth the love of those you trust,
And never more seek mine. Sir, fare you well!
Excuse the blunder which beguil'd you hither;
And hie you, if conveniently you can,
To some more distant spot than whence you came.

RUGGIERO.

To you and to your vicinage, farewell!
The refuge that is most remote is best:
A prison at Palermo not the worst.

[*Exit.*

FIORDELIZA.

A prison! And the King, as some believe,
Is greedy for his life. Alas! alas!
How cruelly I spake! And at the Farm,
And nowhere else, perchance, could he be safe.
And I have driven him thence, and he will rush . . .

Oh, look! I see his blood upon my hands!
Come back, Ruggiero, dear, belov'd Ruggiero!
Return — return — I knew not what I said —
Come back to me — forgive me — oh, come back!

[*Exit.*

Enter FRA MARTINO *and* GIROLAMO.

FRA MARTINO.

Where is the Lady Fiordeliza? These letters, Girolamo, bring us the fatal tidings which we have so long expected. Your honoured master died at Jerusalem that very hour that we were sadly celebrating his birthday here at Malespina.

GIROLAMO.

Alas! we seemed to know it then; and the letters that tell of it now might be thought but to certify what was seen darkly before.

FRA MARTINO.

The Chamberlain writes me that the Countess must repair to Palermo with all convenient speed for certain ceremonies which the law enjoins. But where is the Lady Fiordeliza? She will be of more comfort to my Lady than I.

Enter MARIANA.

MARIANA.

Oh, piteous spectacle! oh, rogues and slaves!
That I should live to see it!

FRA MARTINO.

Mariana!

MARIANA.

Oh, shame upon you! Shame! to stand like stocks
And see him taken! Do you hear her skrieks?
She'll die of this — I know she will — oh shame!
There! hark! she shrieks again!

FRA MARTINO.

Who shrieks? be calm;
Say what has happen'd?

MARIANA.

They have seiz'd the Count.

FRA MARTINO.

What Count?

MARIANA.

His Lordship of Arona.

FRA MARTINO.

Where?

MARIANA.

There — not a bowshot from the Castle gate —
Before my Lady's eyes.

GIROLAMO.

Where were my men?

MARIANA.

Your men? you have no men.
Twenty bald heads I saw put out at windows,
And gouty feet went shuffling over floors —
But as to manhood, there is more in me
Than in a hundred of such mummies. Oh!
Had there been one stouthearted wench to back me!

FRA MARTINO.

Run, Girolamo — send a summons round
To all the Count's retainers. Oh, those cries!
Go, take her to her chamber. — Is she there?

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Station of St. Elmo in the Forest— SILISCO *in pilgrim's weeds.*

SILISCO.

Full many from the Holy Land return
Less holy than they went. My pilgrimage,
In gratitude and earthly love begun,
To heavenly, let me hope, shall lead at last;
For t'was not ended when I westward turn'd,
Nor was I more in Palestine, methinks,
A pilgrim and a stranger in the land
Than here in Sicily I feel myself.
Hark! there are voices! travellers, no doubt.
This shelter then will not be all mine own.
Why should it be? So churlish am I grown
That nothing pleases me but Solitude,
She that for shadows keeps an open house.

And entertains the future and the past.
Yes—there are voices—from which side I know not
And through the mist is nothing to be seen
But apparitions thin—the ghosts of trees.

Enter the PROVOST *and* MARSHALSMEN, *with* RUGGIERO *as a Prisoner.*

God's mercy! 'Tis Ruggiero! Hush, be still,
Unruly tongue! In custody, I think.

PROVOST.

Foul ways, foul ways. When a bog, a fog, and a forest conspire, 'tis well for travellers to be housed betimes. Hey! but here's a Pilgrim before us! Light a fire, my lads. Ha! here's the blood of old Guffo on the hearth-stone still. He resisted to the death, and we were forced to slay him. God save you, Sir Pilgrim.

SILISCO.

Save you, Sir!

PROVOST.

You see here a great man, Sir, that was once. But we will say no more. The course of justice, Sir.

SILISCO

I have heard that Greatness and Justice come together more often as opposites than allies.

PROVOST.

Hey! How is that? Seek about, lads, in the wood for the driest sticks you can find, and I'll fetch down the rushes from the loft—looking to locks and bars though first.

[*Exeunt* PROVOST *and* MARSHALSMEN.

SILISCO.

Ruggiero!

RUGGIERO.

Sir, you know my name; what more?

SILISCO.

Much more, Ruggiero. Am I then so chang'd
You know me not? Were you as chang'd as I,
I scarce can think that beard, or gown, or hood,
Or tawny paintings of the Syrian sun,
Or inward alteration working out,
Could hide Ruggiero from Silisco.

RUGGIERO.

Ha!

Silisco! grace defend us! whence art thou?

SILISCO.

From Palestine. But is it thus we meet?
What courtly perfidy or princely lapse
Hath brought these cursed fetters upon hands
That might have preach'd with Paul?

RUGGIERO.

Of that anon.
'Tis but the chafing of the lovesick King
At losing of Lisana. And you come
From Palestine? Then the good Count is dead?

SILISCO.

No care could save him. To my charge he gave
A priceless relic for Rosalba's hands,
Wherewith I now repair to Malespina.

RUGGIERO.

Hush! here's the Provost.

Re-enter the PROVOST *from above.*

SILISCO.

Did you hear a cry?
A howling as of wolves? no, did you not?
Where be your men?

PROVOST.

What! wolves, Sir? Blockheads! dolts!
If there be wolves, why come they not within?

[*Exit.*

SILISCO.

Go, seek thy fellow-blockheads in the fog,
And spare us time to speak. Lisana, said you?
Was she the cause of quarrel?

RUGGIERO.

She it was;
Seeing I hid her from his amorous quest,
And where, he cannot to this day divine.
'Tis in the convent of San Paolo,
Whereof my aunt is Abbess. She fulfils
The time of her noviciate there, which past,
She takes the veil. I kept myself conceal'd
Till that were done; and now the day draws near,
St. Michael's Eve, and luckless that I am
These marshalsmen have clutch'd me.

SILISCO.

Luckless? No;
When we two come together, I deny

That Fortune can be adverse. Two to four?
What could we wish? Ruggiero, by my life
My blood is bounding in me at the thought
As wildly as an unbroken Barbary horse.
Hark! are they coming?

RUGGIERO.

Now I know thee well.
Thy blooming, gay, ungovernable youth
Comes back upon thy face. But rein it in,
Rein in, Silisco, the wild Barbary horse.
These marshalsmen, untoward as they are,
But execute the service that they owe.
I would not harm them.

SILISCO.

Circumvent them then.
By stratagem we'll spare to break their bones.
Yes, yes; I see; by stratagem we'll work;
We'll touch them not; we will not lift a hand;
Yet shall they fly like madmen through the wood,
And leave you free. My wits have been to school
In many an exigency exercis'd
Since last we met, and scarce shall find their match
In clowns like these.

Re-enter the PROVOST *and the* MARSHALSMEN, *the first carrying rushes and utensils for cooking, the others dry sticks.*

PROVOST.

Aye, put a light to these, and we shall soon have a blaze.

SILISCO.

Oh, Sir! I pray you, Sir, do not step upon the hearth-stone. Nor you, Sir; nor you.

FIRST MARSHALSMAN.

What should hinder us? what's in the hearth-stone?

SILISCO.

I beseech you, do not. See now! they have trampled over it, all three of them.

PROVOST.

Why what, Sir? what then?

SILISCO.

Why, did you not say that stain on it was from the blood of some malefactor?

PROVOST.

Aye, it was old Guffo. How hard he died, the old fool! He was hacked and chopped from nape to

chine before he fell, and the blood streaming down his white beard! Ugh! it makes me shudder to think of it!

SILISCO.

And know ye not, then, that this is the night of the release of Barabbas?

PROVOST.

I knew it not; but what if it be?

SILISCO.

Must a man travel to the Holy Land to know that? Surely ye are not so ignorant but ye know that there is this night a jubilee of all the malefactors in the regions below, and that if any one shall have trodden this day on the blood of a malefactor, his ghost is permitted to rise at twelve o'clock of the night, on the spot where his blood was trampled.

PROVOST.

Where heard'st thou that, Sir Pilgrim?

SILISCO.

What is there!

[*Starts back and overturns the table. The* MARSHALSMEN *rush out of the house, the* PROVOST *following and calling them back.*

Did I not tell you that their wits were weak? I'll warrant them to run three miles through bog and briar, before they stop to take breath.

RUGGIERO.

An easy riddance. But the Provost is a shrewd fellow.

SILISCO.

Should he waylay us, we have but to trip up his heels and bind him to a tree; and if he hath upon him the key which unlocks these fetters, there is the edge of a file saved. But whither shall we go?

RUGGIERO.

The convent of San Paolo is not far distant: St. Michael's Eve is at hand: and I would fain bid Lisana farewell, and see her take the veil. We will not seek harbour there before that day, lest we should be tracked and she be hindered; but if thou wilt, let us live like wild hunters in the woods till St. Michael's Eve.

SILISCO.

Have with you! there's no roof-tree that I love
Like the live roof-tree of the forest. Come.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room of State in the King's Palace at Palermo—
ROSALBA, FIORDELIZA, *and an* USHER.

USHER.

Madam, his good Lordship your father bade me say he is seeking the King, and will presently bring you word what day is fixed for your investiture.

[*Exit.*

ROSALBA.

This is the chamber. When I see again
The tapestry and old chairs, a very dream
Seems the past year, from which, awakening now,
My childhood seems the sole reality.

FIORDELIZA.

Yet if I err not, when we last were here
Your childhood was the dream ; the life you then
Were wakening to seem'd very sweetly real.
Do you remember? 'twas the second time
You met Silisco.

ROSALBA.

Three long days had past
(Long though delightful, for they teem'd with thoughts

As Maydays teem with flowers) since I had first
Beheld him, standing in the sunset lights
Beside a wreck half-buried in the sand
Upon the western shore. I see him now
A radiant creature with the sunset glow
Upon his face, that mingled with a glow
Yet sunnier from within. When next we met
'Twas here, as you have said; and then his mien
Was lighter, with an outward brightness clad,
For all the Court was present; yet I saw
The other ardour through.

FIORDELIZA.

And when he came
Before the throne and knelt, I watch'd you both,
For I was half suspicious, and I saw
How from the King his quick eye glanc'd aside,
And gaily for a furtive moment fix'd
Upon yon Venus rising from the sea
Wrought in the tapestry; then he rose and bow'd
To you, who answer'd with your sweetest smile,
Whilst old Count Ugo . . . .

ROSALBA.

Oh, my Fiordeliza!
These tears—these tears—they ought to be for him,
The good old man — so pious, so benign,
So generous,—they ought to be for him,
And yet they are not. It is God rewards
Such bounty and benignity as his!
God saw his heart, that it was fill'd with love,
And mine a cold, unhallow'd, thankless void,
And took him from me—took him to Himself——

FIORDELIZA.

Hush! here's your father.

Enter UBALDO.

UBALDO.

I have sought the King,
But vainly. He secludes himself, they say,
Being St. Michael's Eve, for castigation,
(Good, excellent man! what land was e'er so blest!)
That he may hold high festival unhurt
To-morrow. But I doubt not of the day.
Be here to-morrow, when the Court is held,
And you shall take your lands.

ROSALBA.

Oh, father dear,
May not this homage be more private?

UBALDO.

What!
A private homage! never heard of one.
'Tis *coram curiâ;* it must be. Come.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter THE KING *and* NITIDO, *Groom of the Chambers.*

NITIDO.

I have tracked her, my Lord; I have smelt her out; and she shall be found in the convent of San Paolo.

THE KING.

Is that certain?

NITIDO.

She was seen there by the bedside of a singing girl called Aretina, once one of the wild ones at Palermo, now dying devout in the convent hospital, and nursed by Lisana. Aretina sent for her brethren to speak a word of warning to them before she died; they saw Lisana, and brought word to me that she was then about to profess, her noviciate being just expired.

THE KING.

Go to Haggai, the old Jew, and bid him come to me instantly. Provide me a habit of a Franciscan friar, and meet me here an hour after sunset.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Chapel of the Convent of San Paolo—THE ABBESS, SILISCO, *and* RUGGIERO.

RUGGIERO.

A welcome day! And is her mind then giv'n
To heavenly thoughts, and totally discharg'd
Of that unhappy passion which so seiz'd
Her spirit for the King?

ABBESS.

Ere wan'd one moon
Of her noviciate, it had pass'd away
Like the soft tumult of a summer storm.
But, cousin, of yourself? say whither next?
May I in this deliverance rejoice?
Will you live safely now beyond the seas?

RUGGIERO.

Not so; it was but for Lisana's sake
That I was fain to skulk. Her lot secur'd,
I feel my freedom. I am free thenceforth
To enter on captivity.

SILISCO.

He scorns
To hide his head upon his own behalf
When charges lie against him, that assault
His unstain'd honour. Would that I could wend
With him to Court; for thither, as I learn,
Resorts Count Ugo's widow, whom I seek.
But in Palermo is a villanous tribe
Of Jews that set their faces like a flint
Against me, and with rights my folly gave
To back them formerly, should they find my slot,
Would hunt me to the death, although my skin
Were all my death could give them. Madam, here
I fain would hide myself.

ABBESS.

Ruggiero's friend
Is more than welcome; and for you, my Lord,

You're opportune; there's here a hapless girl
Upon her deathbed who craves constantly
To see you, harbouring in her breast, it seems,
Some secret that concerns you.

SILISCO.

And her name?

ABBESS.

Silvestra, but the name she went by once
Was Aretina.

SILISCO.

Ha! I knew her well.
How came she hither?

ABBESS.

Brought some six months since
Upon a litter by a turbulent troop
Of wild and shaggy men, who seem'd her friends,
And crav'd our care to cure her of a wound,
Whereof she languish'd, given her in a brawl.
We made her welcome to the hospital,
And there Lisana nurs'd her night and day,
And though her body might no more be heal'd
Breath'd health upon her soul; and now her hour

Approaching, there remains upon her mind,
She says, this only burthen. Rest you here,
Good cousin; here Lisana comes anon,
And ere the rite proceeds you'll take your leave.
My Lord, I'll bring you to this girl at once,
For she is verily at the point of death.

[*Exeunt* ABBESS *and* SILISCO.

RUGGIERO (*alone*).

Time was when with a sorrowful regard
I had beheld the clust'ring tresses clipp'd,
The black veil dropp'd upon a face that beam'd
With youthful beauty. It is so no more.
The fairest flower that e'er was born of earth
Were better cropp'd than cankered.

Enter LISANA.

LISANA.

Oh, my Lord,
In this a crowning kindness you confer.
I pray'd for this, and faithless as I was,
Now that the day had come that was the last,
I thought my prayer denied. Oh friend belov'd,
Who propp'd this weak heart in its weakest hour,

Rejoice with me, rejoice! Your work is done,
Your recompence achiev'd! a soul is sav'd —
A joyful, thankful soul!

RUGGIERO.

Lisana, yes;
I will rejoice; I do; though mortal eyes
Must still have lookings backward. Yet 'tis best;
The holiest verily are the sweetest thoughts,
And sweetest thoughts were ever of your heart
The native growth.

LISANA.

No more of that, my Lord;
It savours of the blandishments of earth.
Look onward only — up the eminent path
To which you led me — which my feet have trodden
With gladness, issuing daily to the light,
Till meeting now the radiance face to face,
Earth melts, Heaven opens, Angels stretch their hands
To take me in amongst them, glory breaks
Upon me, and I feel through all my soul
That there is joy, joy over me in Heaven.

RUGGIERO.

Then joy too shall be over you on earth.
My eyes shall never more behold your face
Till, looking through the grave and gate of death,
I see it glorified and like to His
Who rais'd it; but I will not waste a sigh
On what, if seeing, I should see to fade.

LISANA.

Farewell! my Master calls me.

RUGGIERO.

Fare you well.
I pace a lower terrace; but some flowers
From yours fling down to me, at least in prayer.

LISANA.

Oh beautiful on the mountains are the feet
Of those who bring what you have brought to me!
And joy and beauty shall bestrew your path
If prayers of mine may prosper. Fare you well.

[*She retires within the rail of the altar in the back-scene. Sacred music is heard. Processions of monks and nuns pass in. She kneels; her hair is shorn; a blessing is pronounced upon her by a Bishop; she retires; and the monks and nuns follow.*

RUGGIERO.

There passes from the sight of man a face
More fit for angels than for men to see;
A face that I shall think of in my prayers
To nourish my devotion. Now for earth
And earth-encumbered ways. Oh wilderness,
Whose undergrowths and overgrowths conspire
To darken and entangle — here a mesh
Of petty prickly hindrance, there the wreck
Of some high purpose stricken by the storm —
What wary walking shall suffice to thrid
Thy thickets? Happy they who walk by faith,
And in the dark by things unseen supported!
Knowing that clouds and darkness lead to light
Which else were reach'd not — knowing as they speed,
That in this mortal journeying, wasted shade
Is worse than wasted sunshine.

Enter SILISCO.

How is this?
A tear upon your cheek?

SILISCO.

Is that so strange?
Dear soul! Her death was worthy to be wept
With showers of tears.

RUGGIERO.

Is Aretina dead?

SILISCO.

Died in my arms but now, meek penitent!
With love and joy upon her lips—so sweet
'Twas as the dying of a summer's day;
And blessed was the chance which brought me here
In time to make her happier in her death.

RUGGIERO.

What was it you could do?

SILISCO.

Her mind, poor girl,
Was burden'd with two secrets — one the love
She bare me, in our earlier jocund days,
Which 'twas a solace to disclose in death—
The other of strange import — on her tongue
To tell me when we jostled in the cave
And base Spadone stabbed her from behind.
'Twas this,—that that same treasure which was brought
From Rhodes on board the luckless Maddalena,—
That treasure which we deem'd Calabrian Seas

Had swallow'd with the Boatswain and the Mate
What time you chas'd them riding on the storm
And saw them founder,—that that treasure still
Is extant upon earth, lodg'd in that cave.

RUGGIERO.

Why then your fortunes are rebuilt.

SILISCO.

Much more
The fortunes of those three rapacious Jews
Whose claim did to my drowning fortunes cling,
And now will choke them as they come to the top.
Still am I fortunate that I can face
All claimants, be they Christians, Jews, or Turks;
And fortunate beyond my hope in this,—
That I can instantaneously repair
In person to Palermo, to fulfil
My mission to Rosalba.

RUGGIERO.

Speed you well!
I'll follow you to-morrow. For this night
In courtesy I needs must sojourn here.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

The Pass of Smarrimento in the Mountains near the Convent of San Paolo — HAGGAI *and* SADOC.

HAGGAI.

The shadows of the rocks fall so black in the moonshine, that if we stand up close he shall not see us at five yards.

SADOC.

Yet is three to one better than two; and if Shallum have failed us . . . . But I will whistle again.

[*Whistles.*

Enter SHALLUM.

SHALLUM.

What's here to do, my brethren? Your messenger was instant with me, and I came; but I like not the mountains by night.

SADOC.

Why thou hast nothing to lose?

SHALLUM.

Except my life.

HAGGAI.

And ten thousand ducats to gain. Here, put this cloak on, and when thou hearest a step, draw this mask over thy face.

SHALLUM.

What, what! I will not—nay! What is in hand?

HAGGAI.

Briefly, the King sent for me secretly this morning, to borrow ten thousand ducats, and for a small consideration I learnt from Master Nitido, that it was wanted for the spoiling of a maiden which prepareth herself to be a nun, and that the King should disguise himself as a friar, and go forth this night to seek her at the Convent of San Paolo, and should take the money with him. Monstrous! that such store of gold should be lavished in the trafficking with a convent and the loosening of the girdle of a maid! Well! he shall shortly pass this way, and then shall we take back, to be used in an honest and profitable employment, that gold which, to serve a filthy and villanous attempt, I was, as it were, almost constrained to give.

SHALLUM.

Haggai! Thou would'st not rob the King.

HAGGAI.

Yea, mine own father, if it were to save him from sin.

SHALLUM.

The whole country should be aroused to discover who were the robbers which had robbed the King.

HAGGAI.

Thou errest. To disclose the robbery were to betray himself. He will return discomfited from his enterprise, and hide his countenance from the shame thereof. Come, be of a good courage, and get thee ready. Look up, Shallum! make a cheerful noise to the God of Jacob. When it came into my heart to think this thing, and I considered that the gold which passed from me at noon should return to me ere the second watch, I was as a man that rejoiceth in his own; yea, I skipped like a ram.

SHALLUM.

I like it not; I like not this. I am an aged man; neither am I bold as one that useth to take with the strong hand.

SADOC.

Hark!

HAGGAI.

Stand up here, Shallum.

SHALLUM.

I cannot, I cannot. My flesh trembleth and my belly cleaveth to the ground.

SADOC.

Then get thee up yonder, and when we fall upon him, jump from rock to rock overhead, and cry 'Ho' here and 'Ha' there, and 'smite him' on the right hand, and 'throttle him' on the left; and so thou which art but half a man shalt seem as thou wert ten men.

SHALLUM.

Yea, I will up yonder. I will jump.

HAGGAI.

Begone then, for I hear a step.

[SHALLUM *climbs up the rocks.*

THE KING *enters, and is assailed by* HAGGAI *and* SADOC, *with cries of "Booty! booty! Kill him! cut his throat! What! wilt thou? What! wilt thou? What! ten to one and stand out!" whilst* SHALLUM *shouts from the rocks overhead. Then enter* SILISCO.

SILISCO.

What's here! a murder? Villains, take ye that.

[*Stabs* HAGGAI, *who falls.* SADOC *and* SHALLUM *fly.*

HAGGAI.

I'm slain, slain, slain! Oh, woe is me! I die.
Oh, Sadoc, Shallum, cowards, traitors, knaves!
No manhood in you, none! I die, I die.

[*Dies.*

SILISCO.

Sadoc and Shallum! As I live, this wretch
Is Haggai, the old Jew.

THE KING (*taking the mask from the face*).

Brave Pilgrim, yes;
I knew him, and 'tis he. But who art thou,
To whom I owe my all unworthy life?

SILISCO.

My name is Buonaiuto. Sir, for yours
I am not so undutiful to ask
What, if the moonlight and my erring ears
Beguile me not, I may be bold to guess,
You loth to speak.

THE KING.

Sir, if you know me, this
You likewise know, that deep as is my debt
For this your service, I have power to pay it.
Name what you will.

SILISCO.

My Lord, when next we meet
It may be I shall ask you to remember
The business of to-night.

THE KING.

Meanwhile, good friend,
Be secret. In my tustle with those knaves
I got some hurts and strains. I pray you, Sir,
To help me hence, and find me, if you can,
A horse to take me to Palermo. So.
I walk but clumsily. I thank you. So.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

The Audience Chamber in the Palace at Palermo — Enter STEWARD, UNDER-STEWARD, *and Attendants.*

STEWARD.

Call you this a Hall of Audience? Why 'tis a ship's cabin in a gale o' wind. Here, Trollo, move this table to the wall, and set the throne upon its legs. Where's Grossi? Be tender with it, for the three legs that are old have the dry-rot, and the one that is new hath a warp. Is Grossi here?

UNDER-STEWARD.

No, Sir, he is ill of a surfeit.

STEWARD.

I thought so. A walk betwixt bed and board is the best of his day's work. Where is Tornado?

UNDER-STEWARD.

He hath a quarrel with Secco, and will not come in the same room with him.

STEWARD.

The cause — the cause?

UNDER-STEWARD.

Nay, Sir, I know not that.

STEWARD.

Then I will tell you, Sir; short work's the cause;
Short work it is fills palaces with strife.
Nothing-to-do was Master Squabble's mother,
And Much-ado his child. A chair of state
Each side the throne. The Chamberlain's is one;
The other the Justiciary's. So.
A footstool for the Chamberlain. That gout
Will one day be the death of him. There — so —
Now all's in order as befits a Court;
Chambering is seated on the right o' the King,
And Justice on his left. Here's Nitido.

Enter NITIDO, *with a ewer and napkins.*

What, is the King not risen?

NITIDO.

He's risen but now;
Three hours behind his wont.

STEWARD.

Is he not well?

NITIDO.

He says that being troubled in his dreams
He walk'd in sleep, and falling from the sill
Receiv'd some hurts and strains.

STEWARD.

Ay truly, Sir!

And hath he seen the Doctor?

NITIDO.

No, nor will.

He says he never in his life was sick
But when he saw the Doctor. He is rob'd
And will be here anon. Off! Off! he comes!

[*Exeunt.*

Enter THE KING, UBALDO, *the* CHIEF JUSTICIARY *followed by the Principal Judicial Functionaries, a crowd of Officers and Courtiers, amongst whom is* SILISCO, *still in his Pilgrim's garb.* TRIBOLO *the* KING'S FOOL, FIORDELIZA, *and Ladies of the Court.*

UBALDO.

It is a trick of youthful blood. In my youth I too would walk in my sleep. I remember Filipo Reni mistook me for the ghost of Angelina Spinola, whom he had forsaken.

TRIBOLO.

And I would walk too. I remember, walking in my sleep one night, I came into Mistress Barbara Malfatto's

bedchamber, and again very suddenly proceeded forth of it by the way of the window; but whether sleeping I walked out, or waking was tumbled out, is not written in the Clown's Chronicle.

THE KING.

Did'st thou fall far?

TRIBOLO.

I fell in the garden, and the stem of a daffodilly was broken, besides my leg. My leg was set, and some foolish women call it the best leg in Palermo to this day. But the daffodilly died of it; and his last words were . . .

UBALDO.

Enough, Fool; stand aside.

TRIBOLO.

Stand aside, the world is wide—
There's room for folly and place for pride.
Which is which?
Quoth the poor to the rich.

UBALDO.

Now, if it please your Majesty, this child—
Where is she?—shall perform her ho mage due

And take investiture of Count Ugo's lands.
Where is the Countess?

FIORDELIZA.

She was here but now.
She went but to her chamber.

UBALDO.

Go and fetch her.

[*Exit an Usher.*

THE KING.

Meanwhile, if any here, Sirs, hath a suit,
This is St. Michael's festival; 'tis now
His time to speak.

SILISCO (*stepping from the crowd*).

Sir, if it please your Grace,
A suit have I.

THE KING.

What suit it be I know not;
But this I know, that thou hast rights and claims
Which none but I can estimate. Prefer
Thy suit, or better leave to me to name
Unsu'd for thy reward. Three Jews there be,
The one called Haggai, who died yesterday,
The other two, Sadoc by name and Shallum,

Whose lives and goods are forfeit to the law.
Those goods, whate'er the value, shall be thine,
Good Pilgrim; Fame delivers them not less
Than a King's ransom; but if Fame should err,
Ask more, and it is granted.

SILISCO.

Sire, the sense
Of loyal service done is, unbegilt,
Worth what you say, the ransom of a King.
These goods, the forfeits of those felon Jews,
Were sometime own'd by that unhappy youth
They prey'd upon, the Lord of Malespina.
I would accept them gladly at your hands;
And yet....

THE KING.

Speak freely. Aught beside?

SILISCO.

And yet
More gladly would forego them and receive
Another boon, the pardon, shall I say,
Where fault is none? the pardon of a man
Whom should you in your royal heart replace
You should yourself replenish and repay

My service fifty-fold — the pardon, Sire,
Of one whom once you counted with the first
Of councillors and friends, the Lord Ruggiero,
Count of Arona.

UBALDO.

Pilgrim, art thou mad?
Know'st thou this presence?

THE KING.

Let him speak, my Lord;
He knows his privilege and the presence too.
He's by permission bold. The suit he moves
Is one of grave concern. That outlaw'd Count
I have some cause to think was falsely charged.
It may be that too light an ear I lent
Too willingly to enemies of his
That were no friends to me. But whilst he hides
And bids defiance to our writ, our grace
Can scarcely flow toward him.

SILISCO.

Sire, not long
Shall that obstruction stand against the tide
Of your free grace and favour.

THE KING.

Here is she
Whose comely presence, wheresoe'er she moves,
Makes in itself a festival. The day
Is more adorned.

Enter ROSALBA.

Lady, before I claim
The homage to my sovereignty owing,
'Tis fit that to that sovereignty of yours
Which Nature crowns I bow. Queen had I been,
Not King, I gladly would have given my crown
In barter for your beauty.

ROSALBA.

Nay, my Lord,
You had not then so easily been pleas'd.
I pray you, father, prompt me with those words
I ought to speak.

UBALDO.

Kneel first and put thy hands . . . .

THE CHIEF JUSTICIARY.

Beseech you pardon me, Lord Chamberlain,
This homage by the law may not proceed
Until Count Ugo's testament be read.

None doubts the Countess by the will inherits;
Still doth the law demand that it be read.

UBALDO.

Ho, ho! my Lord Justiciary! What's this?
Here is the King, the fountain-head of justice!
Who is it that shall dare block up its course
With muddy gatherings and old wrecks of laws?
You, Sir? or you? or you? The good Count died
In Palestine, and if a will there was
No note of it remains.

THE KING.

Indeed, my Lord!
I would it were not so; for I must needs
Stay this procedure. Deem not I was false,
Sweet Lady, or but coining courtly words
In owning to a sovereignty of yours;
For over both of us the Law is King,
And I am most constrain'd.

Enter an USHER *with* GERBETTO.

USHER.

So please your Grace,
Gerbetto, the Physician.

GERBETTO.

To your Grace
I bear a mission from the Count deceas'd,
Whom I to Palestine attended: this
He charg'd me to deliver to none but you.

[*Delivers a packet to the* KING.

THE KING.

'Tis the Count's hand, tho' shaken. 'Tis his will.

UBALDO.

Ah! there's a guardian angel ever waits
Upon your Grace! You cannot if you would
Run cross or counter! See, Sirs, here's the will!
You're right, my Lord; the law is still supreme.
A will there should be, and a will there is.

THE KING.

'Tis strange in purport. "I, Count Ugo, leave
My body to the earth, my soul to God.
My worldly chattels to my wife I leave
Should she remain unwedded. Should she wed,
Or quit this life, I leave them to a friend
And fellow pilgrim to this shrine, by name
'Buonaiuto,' witnessing whereto
I set my hand and seal."

UBALDO.

A pilgrim quotha!
A pilgrim to succeed! Impossible!
A man unknown, unheard of!

THE JUSTICIARY.

Strange bequest!

UBALDO.

Waste paper! Rubbish! A preposterous will!
The good old Count had doubtless lost his wits
Before he died. We saw what small remains
Were left him when he took the mad resolve
To travel; and that little he had left
Did plainly die before him.

ROSALBA.

Speak not so,
Dear Father; he had doubtless good designs,
And knew what he was doing.

THE KING (*to Gerbetto*).

Was it so?

GERBETTO.

The wits that he took hence, my Lord, he kept
To his last breath. But I can partly solve

The riddle of this will. The man it names
Was with the Count throughout; by sea and land,
In troubles and in dangers numberless;
In perils of the elements in ships;
In perils of wild beasts in woods and wolds;
In perils of the midnight robber's knife;
By thirst and hunger in the desert tried,
Fever and sickness in the river's mouth;
By strife and blows in cities; and through all
That pilgrim bare himself as vow'd and sworn
To think of danger, sickness, pain, and death
As accidents unworthy to be weigh'd
With one hour's comfort he could yield the Count.
Thus therefore is it that the Count was moved
Doubtless to make this will.

THE KING.

And what became
Of this good pilgrim? Hast thou seen him since?

GERBETTO.

We parted, Sire .... By Heaven, I see him now!
This is the man!

THE KING.

This he? our friend at need!
He's some knight-errant then that roams the earth
In search of bold adventures.

SILISCO.

Sire, not so.
That which for good Count Ugo I perform'd
Fell short of what I owed him, which was more
Than kingdoms could repay.

ROSALBA.

Whate'er it be
You owed him, Sir, it cannot be the half
Of what I owe to you. The lands he left
Will never through my second marriage fall,
As he provided, to redeem the debt;
But I would fain devolve them ....

UBALDO.

Daughter! child!
I pray you take me with you. Faith of my body!
Devolve them truly!

SILISCO.

Lady, as you say,
It may be that your second nuptials ne'er

Shall turn to good for me; but save by these
I cannot, nor I will not be repaid.
You knew me once. I trust that I am chang'd
No less in mind than mien, and merit more
When known to be esteem'd. That rests with you
To credit or to doubt. But such as now
He is, or like or unlike what he was,
You see, thus stripp'd of this dissembling garb,
Him that was once the Lord of Malespina.

ROSALBA.

It is, it is Silisco!

SILISCO.

Yes, in name,
Perhaps in fortunes, but in nature not
The same Silisco. Lady, once you said
" A spendthrift never yet was generous."
The word dwelt with me, and its strength and truth
By anguish aided and adversity
Wrought in my heart an inward change entire,
And some things you have heard may seem to show
I am not what I was — ungenerous.
But should I press you now for my reward
I well might seem so. Thus once more to touch

This hand with lips unus'd to softness now
Shall be my present meed.

RODALBA.

So strangely fast
Events have come upon me, that my head
Is half bewilder'd; but my heart is clear;
And lost indeed to sense and love and life
That heart must be or e'er it could deny
That it is all your own.

UBALDO.

Why, well! why, well!
This wheel of Fortune turns about, my Lord.
'Tis very strange! but I believe you well —
That you will use your riches thus restor'd
With better sense of what they're worth.

THE PROVOST MARSHAL.

My Lords,
My duty bids me disabuse your minds.
This is no more my Lord of Malespina
Than I am King of Sicily.

THE KING.

How so?

THE PROVOST MARSHAL.

This is that very rogue that tripp'd me up
And in the forest set my prisoner free,
The Lord Ruggiero.

SILISCO.

Sire, I needs must own
That I was guilty of that rescue. Still
I hope to be forgiven; for here is he
I rescu'd, ready to repair the fault
By re-surrender.

Enter RUGGIERO.

FIORDELIZA.

Oh, Rosalba, see!
See who is here! What will be done? Oh, Heaven!
Yet the King looks not angry.

THE KING.

Count, not yet —
Speak not till I have spoken, lest your pleas
Forestall me of my justice in acquittal.
Of that offence which thou wert charged withal
Touching thine office I confess thee free.

Some flatterers of some follies of mine own
Were forgers of the charge. I think, besides,
Thou canst acquit thee on another score,
Tho' there myself was thine accuser, moved
I know not by what promptings of the devil.
I think that thou canst render good account
Of that fair maid Lisana, whom by stealth
Thou took'st so suddenly from the Court.

RUGGIERO.

My Lord,
The maid you speak of is profess'd a Nun;
A Nun since yesterday. I lived conceal'd,
For her sake solely, till the Church could claim
That guardianship she had till now from me.

THE KING.

Something of this had reach'd me: You stand clear
With me, my Lord; and with no little shame
Nor light compunction for mine own misdeeds
Your offices and honours I restore.
But where is she with whom to stand absolv'd
Is best of absolutions — where is she
To whom to be restor'd is more, I know,
Than Kings can give or take?

RUGGIERO.

When last we met
A cloudy fate had compass'd me about,
And I was not so fortunate to please
Her whom to please in duty, faith, and truth,
Has been my life's endeavour: am I now
More happy, standing in the light?

FIORDELIZA.

To me
Is it you speak?

SILISCO.

Rosalba, look! the tears
Break o'er the saucy brightness of her face
First to make answer.

FIORDELIZA.

What am I to say?
I wonder, Sir, what business 'twas of yours
To make that maid a runaway at first,
And then, when you were tired of her, a Nun.

RUGGIERO.

Lady, I think you ask me this in sport;
But were it ask'd in earnest, I should pray
Gerbetto to make answer.

GERBETTO.

Lady, yes,
'Tis I should speak to this. When summon'd hence
To Palestine, I left my child in charge
To this good knight, and well hath he fulfill'd
The trust he took upon him.

THE KING.

Surely now
You will not so untoward be to try
His patience longer. Think how many a year
His suit hath linger'd.

FIORDELIZA.

Well, Sir, if your Grace
Hath less of patience left in looking on
Than I that bear the burthen,—then, I think,
It may be, for your ease and for mine own,
I shall be tutored to say "Yes"—in time.
The scarecrow, Sir, was married to the maypole
In time; but, bless me! 'twas a tedious courtship.

RUGGIERO.

On your own time and humour will I wait,
As heretofore.

FIORDELIZA.

Then, dear Ruggiero, YES.
For 'tis my humour that the time be now.

SILISCO.

Then shall this glorious NOW be crowned the Queen
Of all the hours in all the ages past,
Since the first Morning's rosy finger touch'd
The bowers of Eden. Grace defend my heart
That now it bound not back to what it was
In days of old, forgetting all that since
Has tried and tamed it! No, Rosalba, no —
Albeit yon waves be bright as on the day
When, dancing to the shore from Procida,
They brought me a new joy, yet fear me not —
The joy falls now upon a heart prepar'd
By many a trouble, many a trial past,
And striking root, shall flourish and stand fast.

THE END.

LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

00053619

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 16 January, 2016